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The Editors
IS WORKFARE FAIR?
KING FOR A DAY

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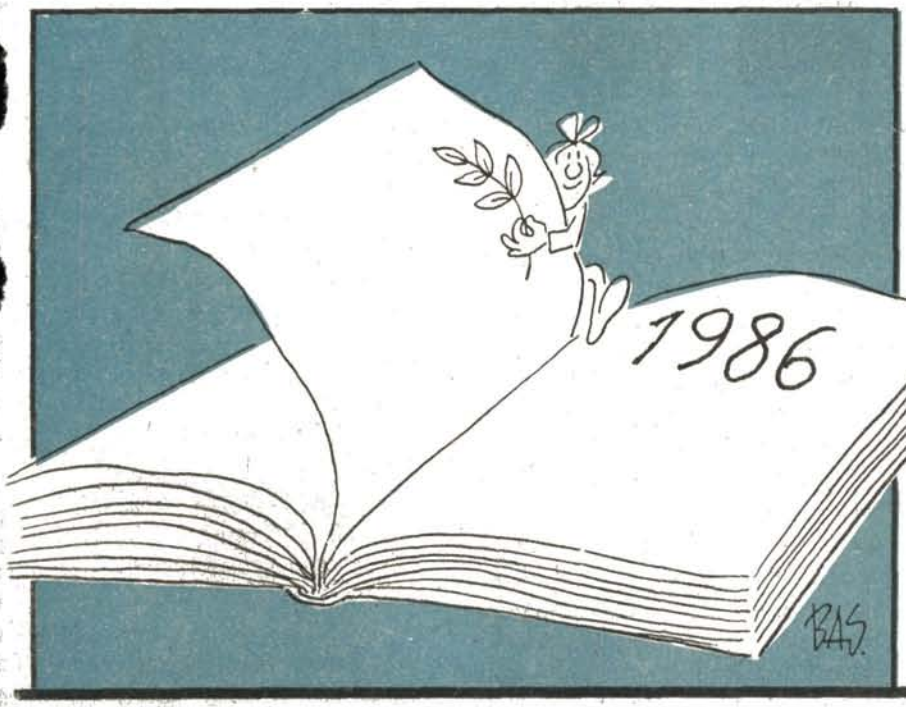

FOUCAULT'S QUEST
James Bernauer

'PRACTICAL POLITICS'
Nancy Amidei

CONTRACEPTION & CONTROVERSY
Robert G. Hoyt

SPYING FOR SALE
David R. Carlin, Jr.

The malpractice muddle

Bad medicine for everyone
DENA SEIDEN

The abstract enemy

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Correspondence

The crisis deepens

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Lisa Sowle Cahill uses the word "crisis" many times in her essay ["Morality: The Deepening Crisis," September 20]. I think it is a poor word to use in this context, and not just because it has become a rather vulgar journalistic cliché. The word, and indeed her essay, betrays an approach to moral questions which seems more interested in the establishment of an ideological position than in the balanced quest for truth and consistency.

One meaning of the word "crisis" is the condition of instability leading to decisive change. It is certainly true that the church is very divided on many moral issues. (I wish that I read more about *both* sides of this crisis in *Commonweal*.) But it is not at all certain that the church is now at a turning point, or a crossroads — which is what a "crisis" implies. Cahill complains about the demand for conformity which comes from the center, yet her article at times seems to imply that she herself is tired of the dissonance within the church.

There are, I think, certain tensions within her essay which betray an ideological, rather than a concrete, approach to moral matters. On the one hand she sees a conflict between the natural law and the Vatican II - *Gaudium et Spes* approach; she believes timely signs should be the point of departure for ethics, rather than "an objective and stable moral order which transcends the relativities of time, place, and culture." She also believes that the arms race and international economic injustice — as opposed to sexual ethics — are the most serious moral issues facing the world, and thus the church. Finally, however, she does argue that sexual ethics and the status of women in the church are connected to the larger social issues. She permits herself to use the vulgar sexist word "macho" to describe the Beirut terrorists, and claims that militarism results from sexual role stereotypes.

This last claim seems rather farfetched, although it is a popular way to link bourgeois feminism with wider social concerns. There is a deeper "crisis" in her argument, if crisis is used in the literary sense of the point at which hostile elements are most tensely opposed. It is the interconnection between sexual moral norms and social justice which shows that there can be no conflict between the natural law and reading the signs of the times. It is the same utilitarian thinking which counsels for divorce and argues that nuclear deterrence is the most "realistic" policy. Without a stable moral order which transcends the relativities of time and place we are at the mercy of expedience: the "expert" technocrats in all fields, from birth control to world hunger.

Finally, there is an inconsistency in her vision of church authority. She quotes approvingly harsh papal statements condemning the arms race and its relationship to world hunger, with a passing complaint that these statements have been consistent, but "ineffective." Yet she closes with an appeal to the authorities that the central emphasis in moral teaching at the 1985 extraordinary synod be "exhortation and support" rather than the condemnation of abuses. This sounds like an appeal to be accommodating to those in the church — Cahill's friends — but unyielding to those who appear to be outside — Cahill's enemies. Both the Gospel and prudence suggest the opposite course.

JAMES L. NASH

The author replies:

Mr. Nash's criticisms of my article represent his genuine concern for the welfare of the church and the integrity of theology. That is a concern I share. I regret Mr. Nash's apparent impression that I reject the concept of "natural law" and the traditional Catholic commitment to an objective moral order. My point was rather that Vatican II's commitment to "the Gospel" and "reading the signs of the times" might lead us to envision natural law and the moral order in different ways. The older, more intellectualist and less historically-conscious understandings have not been fully reconciled, in the teaching of the church, with the impetus of Vatican II. On the question of specific moral issues, I agree with Mr. Nash's suggestion that the church should aim for consistency. I do not think this has been accomplished. When the church has spoken out against the arms race and economic inequality, it has not been in terms of the "mortal sins" of individuals, or of absolute moral norms. It *has* been in the context of encouraging mutual trust, respect, and cooperation and with a view to collaboration in t discovery of practical avenues to mo ideals. I hope that this will come to be th case more frequently in discussions of sexual ethics and the roles of women in the church.

LISA SOWLE CAHILL

Sinners & saints

Waltham, Mass.

To the Editors: Lisa Sowle Cahill in "Morality: The Deepening Crisis," [September 20] says some modern women prefer the model of Mary Magdalene "repentant sinner" to Mary, the virgin-mother of God, a model "impossible for most of us to fulfill."

That statement and its context signifies a somewhat feminist reading of the Gospels which is short of the mark. Mary is our model, young and old, men and women, for among the following reasons:

Even as a teenager, Mary is not overwhelmed by the presence of an angel of God. She has the courage and poise to ask an intelligent and crucial question: "How can this be done, since I know not man?"

But this poised and courageous young

(Continued on page 26)

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Contents

Volume CXIII, Number 1

Correspondence	2
Editorials	3
'Practical politics': *Nancy Amidei*	5
Free-market espionage: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	6
The malpractice muddle: *Dena Seiden*	8
The abstract enemy: *Jean Bethke Elshtain*	14
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	15
The sounds of silence: *James Bernauer*	17
Verse: *Nancy G. Westerfield, Mary Ann Coleman, E.B. de Vito*	25

Books

The Politics of Sex and Religion: *Robert G. Hoyt*	20
Jozef Mak: *Holly Metz*	21
The Lost Soul of American Politics: *Dick Howard*	22
Quantum Reality: *David Toolan*	26

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LET WORKFARE BE WORKFAIR

WORKFARE IS an old soldier who never dies. He just fades away into the reserves, ready to be called up at the next battle alert. The call sounded again in 1981 with President Reagan's proposals to overhaul the welfare system to discourage dependence upon relief. More than twenty states have now adopted some form of workfare — work in exchange for benefits — usually linked to the monies paid through AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), the largest single cash item in the welfare budgets of both federal and state governments.

California, for example, has launched its GAIN program which offers persons who receive AFDC an opportunity to pursue education, job training, or jobs within private industry (and government as a last resort). The program is voluntary. Wages are said to be comparable to starting salaries for similar jobs in the private sector. When necessary, child care, health care, and transportation money will be provided in this new and expensive program. GAIN has not yet passed the test of whether it will prove effective.

New York's New Employment Opportunities Program begins this year with newcomers to the welfare rolls and those currently receiving AFDC whose youngest child is at least six years old. While similar to GAIN in scope, the New York program differs in that it is compulsory, and the day-care subsidies are less generous. Precedent has been set in New York by work requirements in other programs such as Home Relief, a program for single people, which requires employment of all recipients whom it judges to be "employable" — approximately one-third of all recipients. Of the employable, nearly one-third are already holding jobs for an average of twenty hours a week or less.

Massachusetts has developed what is considered a model program, Employment and Training Choices (ET). Voluntary, and using a high level of state funds along with federal monies, "ET" has placed 17,000 welfare parents in full-time or part-time jobs since it began in the fall of 1983. Of course, the low unemployment rate in the state is a unique and not readily duplicated factor contributing to the success of the program.

California, New York, Massachusetts — where welfare is concerned, these are relatively liberal states. Yet traditionally workfare has been in bad odor with liberals. What has happened?

One development is strictly verbal — and confusing. Where workfare was once a term reserved for measures that *compelled* welfare recipients to take jobs, and sometimes very undesirable jobs, in return for benefits, today the term is being used loosely for a wide range of programs. Some are mandatory but others, as in California and Massachusetts, voluntary. Some, whether voluntary or not, include features like training, on-the-job assistance, and child care as well as work requirements.

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A second development is cultural. Liberals once objected to workfare on the grounds that it threatened to take mothers — the major group of welfare recipients — away from their young children. As long as society had a consensus that mothers should be at home, it seemed an infringement (of children's welfare if not of the mothers') to demand that mothers receiving benefits take jobs. Today, however, with nearly half of all U.S. mothers (single and married) with children over the age of one already working outside the home, this argument no longer seems so persuasive. The availability of adequate and affordable day care remains, however, a pivotal issue in evaluating workfare, especially when mandatory.

A third development is ideological. New Deal liberalism concentrated heavily on questions of material deprivation. Since the sixties, that emphasis has come under criticism from both left and right. Radical critics of public assistance raised the first warnings about "welfare dependency," which they believed dampened the potential of the poor for political mobilization and reform. Neoconservative critics complained of something similar — but with an eye toward what they claimed were welfare's negative effects on its recipients' ability and desire to get ahead in the marketplace. All across the political spectrum, there was a renewed consensus about the positive value of the work ethic. Many welfare recipients, in addition, had always declared their preference for a decent job and agreed, rightly or wrongly, with other citizens about the debilitating effects of the dole.

A fourth development is political. Americans have always been hostile to public assistance provided without any apparent reciprocal effort by the recipients. There is in this attitude a great deal of common sense mixed with self-righteousness and suspicion of the poor. The public demands assurance that the rules of the game by which most people must live are not, in some way, being violated by tax-supported programs. At a time when government provision of benefits is under pressure on all fronts, it may be a strategic concession by advocates of the poor that employment-for-benefits is a necessary condition if funds are to go from the public coffers for those in need.

So much for the change in climate. Yet the fact remains that many traditional worries about workfare retain their validity.

What are those worries? First, that the real purpose of workfare is not to better the condition of welfare recipients but simply to deter those in need from receiving public aid. Second, that workfare can foster a whole set of illusions about those in need and the programs they require.

Consider the first problem — the deterrent, punitive function of workfare. Historically, workfare has often been used to provide cheap labor for undesirable tasks at seasonally opportune moments, or to keep the poor off welfare rolls whenever there was need to swell the labor pool at the bottom of the wage scale. More narrowly, workfare has usually been nothing but another hurdle to discourage the needy from applying for the assistance for which they qualify, or another meaningless but degrading burden to encourage those on welfare to drop out. These motives are very much alive among some supporters of workfare currently, and it is hard to imagine that programs may not be influenced by them.

Advocates of workfare have also argued that it exposes individuals who collect public benefits while earning more on the side than is legally allowed. It is an ironic argument, of course, since these individuals seem, if anything, to be guilty of too much of the work ethic. Certainly they've exhibited the ability to find and hold employment, and in many cases, their resort to fraud reflects the reality that wages for many jobs are too low and welfare benefits too meager to suffice. In short, even a positive work ethic has not led these individuals to financial independence without (fraudulent) subsidy. Of course, no one can argue for the toleration of fraud; but it is worth pointing out that measures aimed at rooting it out are apt to be very different, and carried out in a different spirit, than measures aimed at promoting the work ethic. The latter are meant to bolster those lacking skills and ambition; the former are meant to catch out those with all too much skill and ambition.

It is, to be sure, mandatory workfare that threatens to function largely in a deterrent, punitive way. Voluntary programs — offering options of job placement, education, or job training — pose few of these problems in principle. But these programs, too, should be carefully assessed so as to learn from their successes, failures, and regional idiosyncrasies. Both voluntary and compulsory workfare, moreover, may foster illusions about the poor and their needs. It is worth asking a few further questions.

1. Who really needs workfare? Workfare purports to develop a positive attitude toward work and values associated with employment — self-confidence, discipline, ability to plan ahead, etc. — by extending on-the-job experiences to a group of individuals with limited employment histories. But who really needs this help? The hard core, long-term welfare recipients who constitute only a fraction of the whole? Or the more fluid majority who find themselves on welfare because they are caught in a temporary crisis? The emphasis on workfare may do little (except, perhaps, strengthen the public acceptability of welfare) for the latter group, who basically need *income*, not new skills or work habits, while they get themselves back on their feet.

2. What really builds the work ethic? Would *any* work experience produce the desired results? Is the exercise of choice itself — whether to work or not — a formative factor in developing self-esteem? A case could be made, based on studies by the Brookings Institute of women in the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in the 1970s, that it is not work per se that contributes to a positive work ethic. Non-working mothers in the study showed a strong work ethic which they, in turn, had passed on to their children. Furthermore, women who participated in the WIN program without being placed in an expected job at the end perceived the project as a failure. After a negative work experience, these women looked upon welfare much more positively than before. In sum, for them the program backfired. Which leads to the next question.

3. Can workfare really succeed except in an environment of

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high employment? What jobs will unskilled, semi-skilled, or newly skilled laborers find given the high unemployment rate? Will these workfare participants be in direct competition for jobs with displaced workers receiving unemployment compensation? Or will workfare participants only find part-time, dead-end employment for low wages and few job benefits? There is a real danger of ending up with the worst of both the welfare and the working worlds — mothers separated from children, anxious about undependable day care, and yet still not independent of public money, which may ultimately function as a subsidy for low-wage labor.

4. Is workfare really the answer to the problem of poverty — or, more specifically, of the underclass? The facts are that many of the poor already work, that many others (such as the elderly) are out of the job market, and that the group most associated with the underclass — young, "unemployable" males — are least likely to gain in any way from workfare. In brief, it's no panacea.

None of these questions provides sufficient reason not to try workfare. But they indicate why programs should be flexible and closely monitored; why the emphasis must be on opportunity and not punitiveness; why decent child care is a key to the whole process; and why participants must receive the tools and the wages to live adequately and get ahead. If workfare is to be fair, its limitations and risks should be fully acknowledged. Else the old soldier should be finally laid to rest.

A KING FOR THE DAY

For the first time this January 20 Americans observe a national holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. The legislative process that led to this commemoration was delayed, sidetracked, and finally signed reluctantly. Lest the holiday be a cause for backlash or narrowed to a particular interest and/or group, committees preparing for its initial celebration have demonstrated both caution and delicacy. The necessity for such tact is indicative of the enduring strains of racial fear and separation that run, so deep and massively, in the American psyche and story.

Yet the fact is — and it is cause for celebration — that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day shatters forever our public holiday color line. Some of our national holidays, it is true, honor not just individuals but vast segments of our society. Yet never before have we paused to reflect, on a recurring annual basis, on one of America's non-white heroes. Now we do.

Martin Luther King Day is not a saint's day. Wire taps and electronic snooping might preclude even the canonized from such honors. Yet Martin Luther King, a man of flesh and blood, stands a just man, one stirred to greatness by repeated efforts to rectify his failures, personal and social.

King Day presents us with an opportunity for considerable reflection. First, it sets before our consciousness the rule of that quiet, enduring law which is more substantive than even national statutes. King's life was one of repeated civil disobedience. He demonstrated a startling obedience to conscience, a value deep in the American grain. January 20, as July 4, honors a remarkable extension of human conscience and freedom. It is evidence of a growth in our appreciation of the dignity of every human being and the primacy of conscience in evaluating and enhancing the very rule of law.

Second, we have set before us (paradoxically, in an era that emulates the Rough Riders), an ideal of nonviolence, the source and instrument of Dr. King's real and not-ineffectual power. Nonviolence extends democracy to its parameters: it values every human voice and silences none; it seeks genuine inclusion and accommodation; its aim is to pursue truth by exhorting to self-sacrifice; and its rationale is the dignity of each and the common good of all. These notions are always timely and unrealized. As components of the American vision, they beckon to be fulfilled. In his lifetime, Martin Luther King, Jr. clearly set that challenge before us. On his day, we comprehend that it remains to us to fulfill that a vision.

Mood in Washington

'PRACTICAL POLITICS'

TO LEGISLATE, EVEN IF BADLY

Anyone who wants to lobby Congress these days gets one consistent piece of advice: "Be practical." The Ninety-ninth Congress has less time for idealism or evidence of need. To be taken seriously, the line continues, means accepting the realities of budget constraints. Anything else runs the risk of being thought soft-headed, a.k.a. not in touch with practical politics. That advice is given freely. But year-end congressional action on the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act (G-R-H), which mandates massive annual budget cuts to eliminate the deficit, makes it ripe for reassessment when poor people's interests are at stake.

By roughly two-to-one majorities in both the House (271-154) and the Senate (61-31), Congress voted to alter the balance of power between the branches of government, and shift responsibility for budget decisions to an automatic mechanism administered by budget analysts (who are not accountable to the voters), rather than by themselves or the president (who are). The new law has been roundly denounced by political analysts of all stripes; its constitutionality is being challenged in court; and it was described by one of its principal sponsors (Senator Warren Rudman, R-N.H.), as "bad legislation." Among those who trashed it were some who simultaneously took the dubious position that doing something bad is better than doing nothing.

G-R-H created strange bed-fellows among both supporters and detractors. Conservatives eager to see an end to the federal role in social policy and/or a balanced budget on almost any terms, found themselves allied with liberals who see G-R-H forcing tax increases and/or military spending decreases. At

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the same time, congressional supporters of domestic programs found themselves joined in opposition to the bill with the biggest of the Pentagon big spenders.

Nonetheless, Congress voted for this "bad law" on the grounds that "practical politics" demanded it; the president first opposed the bill, then signed it. Soon after, on December 20, Congress adjourned after killing House-passed provisions to impose modest controls on costly military contracting abuses, and failing to act on the far less draconian, three-year, $74 billion deficit reduction package that had absorbed most of their time since last January — proving once again a preference for tough rhetoric over tough choices.

Along the way, Congress agreed that a short list of domestic programs would be "exempt" from the automatic budget cuts required by G-R-H whenever Congress and the president fail to meet yearly deficit targets. The "exempted" list includes Social Security benefits (but not the costs of running the system), cash welfare, food stamps, veterans' pensions, railroad retirement, and Medicaid, but *not* Medicare, housing subsidies, programs which help low-income people get or keep a job, or any of the grant programs which currently make it possible for cities and counties to meet the needs of low-income people not covered by programs on the exempted list.

Significantly, nothing in Gramm-Rudman-Hollings would prevent the Congress from cutting any (or all) of the "exempt" programs at other points during the budget process. They are only protected at the point when automatic cuts are needed; they could be cut early in the process to forestall triggering the automatic cuts. If I were poor, old, and relied on government benefits to keep a roof over my head or food on the table, I'd be scared.

Like members of Congress, the various groups that lobby on issues important to poor people also had to consider "practical politics," and decide whether or not to support G-R-H. For them, the matter turned on the issue of the "exempt" list. Ultimately, most chose to oppose G-R-H, reasoning that this bad legislation was particularly bad in its potential impact for poor people, and the claims of practical politics won't change that.

Because the president remains adamant about increased spending for the Pentagon, and equally adamant in his opposition to any tax increases, the budget he sends to Congress on February 3 is bound to make G-R-H look good (by comparison) in its treatment of poor people's programs. By that one measure, G-R-H may be said to be a victory for poor people.

By almost any other measure, "victory" would not be the noun of choice. The problem is one of appearance as much as reality: having *some* programs which help *some* poor people exempted during *some* part of the process is widely misunderstood. Many believe that *all* the interests of *all* poor people have been taken care of *all* through the process. (G-R-H has been explained in TV news reports with simple charts showing just that.)

And if, as some in Congress have claimed, exempting programs like Social Security benefits and veterans' pensions left these representatives without any politically viable argument for voting no, that raises other questions about the value of practical politics. Without the exempt list, this "bad law" might have been defeated — or at least more easily undone at the point of implementation.

Hindsight is always clearer of course, but choices of the sort made by supporters of G-R-H, while practical in an immediate sense, are positive for poor people only in the most short-run and narrowest of terms. In some way, that shouldn't come as a surprise. In politics — practical and otherwise — the politically power*less* have never fared as well as the politically power*ful* without committed national leadership on their behalf. G-R-H is just the latest evidence of how sadly that leadership is lacking. NANCY AMIDEI

(Nancy Amidei, whose frequent articles in Commonweal *included "The Caretakers" in the last issue, is a commentator on National Public Radio's* All Things Considered.)

Of several minds: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*

FREE-MARKET ESPIONAGE

THE AMERICAN WAY OF SPYING

HAVING just passed through the season to be jolly and all that, I've decided to look on the bright side of the recent spate of espionage scandals. Instead of viewing the spies as traitors who would sell their country for thirty pieces of silver, why not regard them as entrepreneurs (ah, my heart leaps up at that word!), who not only want to make a buck for themselves but want to make it in an international market, thereby helping to correct America's balance of payments problem? We may not be doing so well in shoes, textiles, cars, and TV sets, but America leads the world by miles when it comes to the production of first-class military secrets. When Russia, China, Israel, and even *Jane's Fighting Ships* want to get the best military secrets money can buy, you don't see them running off to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. No, sir! They head straight for the good old USA. The magic of our free enterprise system (a system lately revivified by Ronald Reagan) produces imaginative people with a willingness to take risks and who are able to accommodate them.

(Some might wonder why the Soviets would pay good money for military secrets when President Reagan has promised to make a gift to them of the biggest secret of all: the science and technology that will make Star Wars, or SDI, possi-

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ble. The president, despite his longstanding dislike of Communism, has so soft a heart that he told his good friend Mr. Gorbachev that the latter shouldn't waste any rubles doing his own SDI research. Instead, we'll bear the cost of a trillion or two dollars, and as soon as we're finished, we'll ship the blueprints to Moscow as a token of our good will. Meanwhile, Gorbachev can sink his money into things the Soviet people really need, like wheat, cruise missiles, and psychiatric hospitals.)

When, however, I'm not able to keep my eyes fixed on the bright side of the spy picture, I wonder what it is in American culture that teaches people to betray their country for cash. More exactly, what is it in *recent* American culture that teaches this? For not long ago, only a generation or so back, when people betrayed their country they at least had the decency to do so for ideological reasons, not for money.

My guess is that this has something to do with what is quickly becoming, if it has not already become, the prevailing theory of morality in contemporary America. This theory, which is more popular with the college-educated than with the non-college-educated, and more popular with the under-forty crowd than with the over-forty crowd, holds that any conduct is morally permissible provided it doesn't injure others in a direct and tangible manner. This was the theory behind the famous sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, but its application isn't limited to sexual behavior. People who hold this theory are remarkably tolerant of social diversity; in a nation founded on tolerance of diversity, this is what makes them and their theory so attractive. So long as he doesn't pick their pockets or break their legs, they don't object to their neighbor's conduct, however odd it may otherwise be.

The down side of this theory is that it sanctions attitudes of hardcore egoism, which it considers to be as unobjectionable as attitudes of patriotism and Christian charity: and among egoisms, the low egoism of the crude hedonist is no less unobjectionable than the lofty egoism of the person of culture, an egoism which, in a famous estimate given in an earlier age, lost half its evil in losing all its grossness.

By way of rebuttal, I'll be told that this theory plainly does not justify espionage, since espionage injures others. Quite so. But the theory does justify attitudes of self-centeredness and unpatriotism which, given proper conditions, can easily pass over into traitorous actions. Like buildings and bridges and automobiles, moral rules are constructed with a built-in margin of safety. Or at least they used to be.

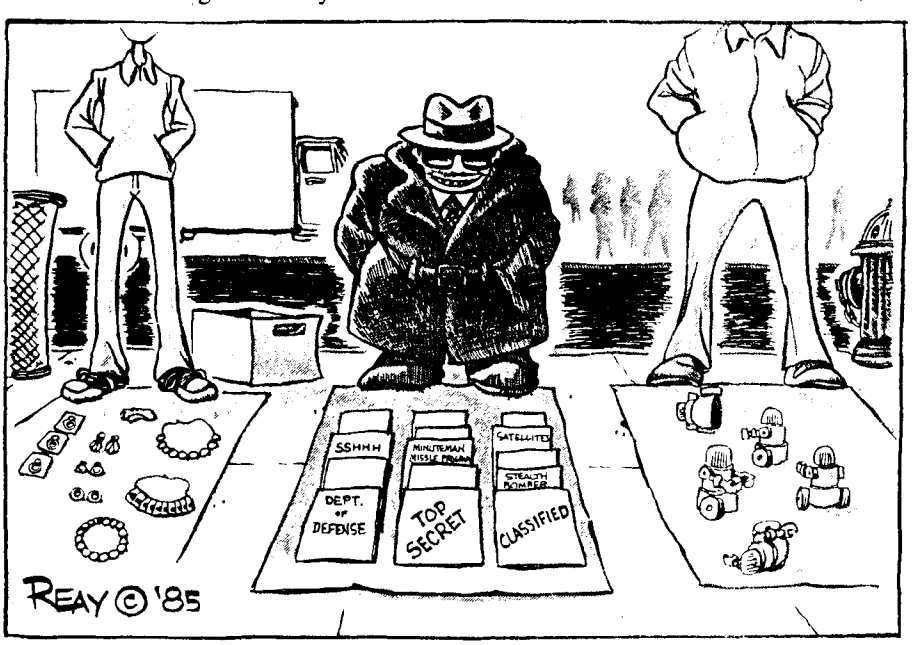
Let me shift from an architectural to a military metaphor. If we picture some indispensable moral rule — for instance, "Thou shalt not betray thy country" — as a citadel, and if we're serious about defending the citadel, we won't let the enemy have free passage right up to its very gates. Instead, we'll build a wall beyond the citadel; then we'll set up defensive outworks beyond the walls; then we'll send troops of soldiers out from time to time on search-and-destroy missions. Occasionally some portion of the enemy may be able to break through all these defensive lines and arrive at the citadel's gates. But if the force getting through has been reduced to a small enough size, thanks to the attrition the enemy suffered as it broke through one defense perimeter after another, there is reason to hope the citadel will hold. But what if the commander of the citadel, under some avant-garde theory of defensive warfare which teaches that nothing is lost till everything is lost, invites the enemy to march with full force up to his gates and only then makes his long-delayed stand? What odds will Jimmy the Greek give on the citadel's remaining inviolate?

If "Thou shalt not betray thy country" is the citadel, attitudes of public-spiritedness and dignified pride are the surrounding walls and outworks. If a theory of morality isn't willing to keep up these defense perimeters, it has to take the blame when the citadel falls, no matter how loudly and sincerely it may swear that it believes in the value of the citadel.

The theory of morality I've been criticizing is obviously more popular with people who think of themselves as liberals than with conservatives, who proclaim themselves to be supporters of a more traditional morality. To show my even-handedness, however, let me point out that the liberal theory is simply a transposition to a non-business key of the traditional laissez-faire justification of business egoism. Or to put this in other words: liberals prefer the kind of egoism which leads to high abortion rates; conservatives prefer the kind which leads to high rates of white collar crime.

So you see, potential traitors have their choice of poisons. My hunch is that in a spirit of secular ecumenism they've imbibed both.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.



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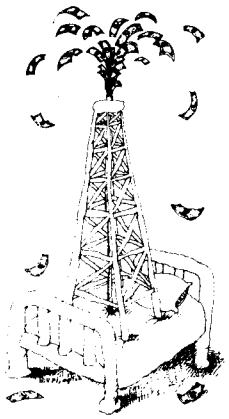

The malpractice muddle

DENA SEIDEN

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION is once again in a "malpractice crisis." The last occurred a decade ago with an attendant fanfare of protests, demonstrations, strikes, and some legislation. The current crisis differs from that of 1975. At that time, the established insurance companies which provided malpractice insurance to physicians simply withdrew from the field, refusing to underwrite liability insurance at any premium price. The crisis now focuses on the extraordinary rise in the cost of premiums being considered by state insurance departments for largely physician-owned medical liability insurance companies (the professionally preferred term for malpractice). These were the companies established in the wake of the 1975 tumult, to provide coverage and to protect physicians against the existing firms' administrative costs, profit margins, etc. Many of these companies are now being found by the various state insurance departments to have inadequate reserves to meet the increasing severity and frequency of suits and awards. Hence, the proposed premium rises, which in New York State would average around 55 percent per carrier according to the most recent calculations, and which would be retroactive to last year or perhaps more.

There is a welter of anecdotal evidence and soft data regarding malpractice. The lack of hard data has a variety of causes: the expense of a major study, the uncertainty about whose interest it serves to fund such a study, and the difficulty in deciding what to measure, whether equity issues, improvement of physician performance, effect on community health and finances, or other possible factors. Nonetheless, the increasing resort to malpractice suits and the growing size of the settlements can be documented. The 40 percent rise in the number of physicians practicing from 1960 to 1978 may account in part for the 24 percent rise in frequency of claims in the same time period, and something similar may be happening currently. But the rise in the incidence of suit from 3.3 per 100 physicians prior to 1978 to 8.9 per 100 now demolishes that as anything close to a full answer.

Data from New York show not only a 59.8 percent increase in the number of malpractice claims in that state between 1976 and 1983, but a 232 percent increase in the average size of the settlements, and a 556 percent (!) increase in the total cost of claims paid.

Physician Malpractice Claims Experience in New York State 1976-1983—All Companies

Year	# of Claims	# of Claims Paid	Average Cost Per Paid Claim	Total Cost of Claims Paid
1976	3180	655	$ 35,970	$ 23,560,000
1977	3312	759	41,119	31,209,000
1978	3553	943	50,156	47,297,000
1979	3712	1063	60,441	64,249,000
1980	3913	1132	72,640	82,228,000
1981	4268	1071	85,570	91,645,000
1982	4359	1000	114,768	114,768,000
1983	5082	1294	119,521	154,660,000
Increase:	59.8%	97.5%	232%	556%

Certain specialties — neurosurgery, orthopedics, and obstetrics — have been particularly hard hit by the rise in suits. In New Jersey, for example, 60 percent of obstetricians have been sued more than once. In New York, nearly 50 percent have been sued three or more times. Why the astounding amount of litigation in obstetrics? Speculation has centered on at least four reasons: the current expectation of having a normal if not a perfect child, an expectation heightened as couples have fewer children and focus greater hopes on those they do have; the depersonalization in obstetrician/patient relationships resulting when the doctor for pre-natal care may not be the delivering doctor; the increase in the number of handicapped babies who survive infancy because of improved technology but then need long-term, very expensive care; and the new technologies themselves, which open up whole new areas of controversy.

Whatever the reasons for increased litigation, physicians are

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reacting strongly. For the last two years, virtually every professional medical journal and the bulletins of nearly every state medical society have been replete with articles reflecting the belief that physicians are beleaguered by a hostile society and battered by fee-crazed lawyers, and consequently are adopting defensive postures to deal with the potential of suit. A key issue is, in fact, the extent to which the increased threat of suit is influencing physicians' behavior. Are they ordering unnecessary tests and procedures, refusing to handle certain types of cases or perform other procedures, leaving areas where malpractice insurance rates and incidence of suit are high, or even stopping practice entirely?

Relocating or abandoning a medical practice is obviously a drastic — but evidently increasingly thinkable — response to the malpractice threat. These are figures from the Medical Society of New York:

A Comparison of Three Surveys in Which New York-trained Resident Physicians Were Asked Whether They Would Stay in New York or Relocate Out-of-State

	1980	1983	1985
Will Practice Medicine in New York	87%	69%	46%
Will Relocate Out-of-State	13%	27%	42%
Undecided		4%	12%

Such findings support the impression that physicians, especially those just leaving residencies, are increasingly willing to pack their bags and move to states like Indiana where high malpractice premiums and frequent suits do not occur, in part because of tough state laws controlling the nature and amounts of suit. Indiana has a $1,200 average premium, South Dakota a $1,500 average. Ohio, a more urbanized industrial state, has an average of $4,000, compared with New York's average of $16,500. In 1984, New York premiums rose to $53,676 for obstetricians and $63,311 for neurosurgeons.

It is possible to argue that this represents, at long last, a way of redistributing the physician surplus to better serve medically needy areas. Such a redistribution, however, is by definition unplanned, and may simply result in a glut of physicians in new areas, and a dearth in others. Or certain types of services may simply become unavailable in some localities. Dr. Charles Gibbs of the American College of Obstetrics/Gynecology Commission of Professional Liability says that many obstetricians are giving up their practices, particularly those with high-risk patients. Patients will have to find care in "expensive, sometimes distant health centers, or from less qualified providers."

The shift from one geographical area to others is paralleled by the shift from one form of medical organization to others. Physicians are more and more seeking salaried posts in a variety of institutions: the profit-making hospital chains, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), medical schools, and teaching hospitals. Malpractice is only one of many causes for this shift. But malpractice insurance and legal counsel are fringe benefits of these jobs and may be encouraging the change in the physician's role from individual entrepreneur to company employee. The outcome for medical practice is likely to be a kind of standardization in care. That may sometimes mean a greater evenness in quality but with some risk to likelihood of innovations. For once an overall treatment protocol is established, any deviation in favor of a new method may be perceived as potential grounds for lawsuit.

SOME PATIENTS and some physicians may be dramatically affected by the pressure to relocate or abandon medical practice, or to take up salaried positions. Affecting even more patients and physicians — and indeed everyone paying taxes or insurance premiums — is the resort to "defensive medicine," i.e., measures physicians use to protect themselves against suits. In 1973 the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare attempted a definitive study of the malpractice issue and concluded that the extent to which defensive medicine was practiced was not then known. A 1984 study from the Harvard School of Public Health predicts that in 1986 the costs of defensive medicine will total $42 billion from "unnecessary invasion diagnostic procedures, excessive medical testing, and unneeded days of hospitalization." The American Medical Association estimates that defensive medicine added $15.1 billion to the cost of American medical care in 1983, and such practices are assumed by the profession to account for 30-40 percent of all diagnostic procedures.

An American College of Obstetrics/Gynecology survey shows 55 percent of its membership are abstaining from high risk deliveries because of fear of malpractice suits, and 18 percent are abandoning all obstetrical practice. The same survey showed obstetricians and gynecologists are:

- becoming more selective about their patients; and referring patients to other physicians more frequently;
- performing less gynecological surgery and more diagnostic tests, passing those costs on to patients and/or third-party payers;
- obtaining written consent more often;
- providing written or taped information to patients more frequently;
- increasingly having other staff present at examinations;
- increasing fees by 10 percent and more over the last two years to cover the higher malpractice premiums (in New York State, 50 percent of obstetricians and gynecologists have increased their fees by 20 percent or more over the last two years).

This is clearly a mixed bag of items; some, such as "written consent" and "more information to the patient," tend to improve patient care. Some factors are more complex: more frequent referrals, for example, are not simply to garner second opinions, many of which are merely protective, but are often an attempt to drop "high-risk" patients. The underlying question is: to what degree are these changes predicated on a fear of suit rather than on the trend in the last two decades toward greater public awareness of patient rights, health education, etc., and the simultaneous diminishing of physician autonomy? The negative side of defensive medicine is difficult to attribute to any cause other than fear of suit. It is highly

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damaging to anything other than the most conservative patient care. It affects physician-patient relationships, pitting one against the other as potential adversaries. It undermines attempts to contain health care costs.

Consider the question of rising rates of birth by Caesarean section. The Medical Society of New Jersey journal notes that while in 1984 the rate of Caesarean section was one in five, in the Northeast it is one in three or two in five. There is speculation that some of this is the result of improved anesthetic techniques, new antibiotics, technological development in electronic fetal monitoring, the age of the population presently giving birth, and the old adage, once a Caesarean, always a Caesarean. But obstetricians' fear of malpractice suits is cited as an overriding reason. In a borderline case, the possible damages of not doing a Caesarean outweigh the risks of doing one. The Harvard School of Public Health study mentioned above predicts 200,000 Caesarean sections a year which are not medically indicated, but done for fear of suit because vaginal birth might be claimed to have damaged an infant.

STATISTICS LIKE these must be complemented by a close look at individual cases. Physicians are appalled, of course, when a single award in Florida for an obstetric case was $12,500,000. Or when a jury awarded $83,037 to a fourteen-year-old boy whose surgeon had removed too much of a chronic ingrown toenail and cauterized the root so it couldn't grow back.

But the real ethical difficulties can only be recognized when a problem like borderline Caesareans is seen in terms of a frequently cited case, *Trotman vs. New York Hospital*, New York Supreme Court, No. 9175/77, June 22, 1983. Here the jury "awarded $3,318,000 to the plantiff whose new-born male infant suffers from mild cerebral palsy as a result of traumatic vaginal delivery." The award is staggering, though one would want to know the definition of a "mild" palsy. However, the case history states that the resident physician found the infant in a breech position and did not report it. Further, that the child was still appearing in a reverse of the normal head-first position, that is, feet first with one foot caught behind his head, when the mother's membrane spontaneously ruptured five hours later. Diagnostic x-ray pelvimetry, which in a case like this would be standard medical practice, was not performed.

Cases like this make malpractice the inflammatory issue it is for both sides. The award was of such magnitude that it has led to a precipitous rise in premium rates and significantly inflated the cost of care for the community as a whole. But the negligence of the physician was so clearly manifest that it cried out for redress.

Consider the case of *Unana vs. Torrance Memorial Hospital*, Los Angeles Superior Court, No. 22-681, December, 1982. The patient plaintiff had been admitted in active labor, with a chart noting previous fetal heart irregularities. This was confirmed by fetal monitoring one hour after admission. The obstetrical resident notified the attending physician one hour after that. The attending physician did not arrive. Four hours after admission, fetal distress was again monitored, and the resident again reported the information to the obstetrician by phone. The attending physician arrived two hours after the second call. A Caesarean section was done, but the child had suffered brain injury with severe mental and motor retardation. The award in the case was $1 million.

Taking note of these cases is not an attempt to prove that physicians are fatally flawed, wildly negligent, uninformed, and uncaring members of society. It *is* an attempt to prove what both society and physicians seem to be invested in forgetting: physicians are members of the same fallen, finite human species as the rest of us, and as such, can do great harm, as can we all.

Such harm falls first, and most immediately, on individuals who should be able to protect themselves against injury and negligence. But the needs and rights of these specific, identifiable, gravely injured individuals must be seen in relation to the needs and rights of the community — that is, of a larger number of unidentifiable individuals who may suffer the less grave but more widespread burden of higher costs, unnecessary procedures, or inaccessible care.

OUR PRESENT system of malpractice litigation has at least two major purposes, and one can argue that neither of them is being served well.

The first purpose is essentially retrospective — providing redress for individuals and families who have been seriously and negligently injured. The 1973 H.E.W. study mentioned above indicates that this is a real problem. In an appendix to that report, H.E.W. estimated that physician-caused injuries may constitute 7.5 percent of general medical and gynecological cases — but also that remarkably few of these negligence cases result in suits. So many factors apparently determine who does or does not undertake litigation and what the eventual outcome is that, for purposes of redressing injury, the malpractice system seems more like a lottery than a reliable source of patient protection.

The way the malpractice system operates also forces us to reflect on the exact nature of "redress." The legal code which Moses gave to the tribes of Israel — e.g., "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" — is sometimes presented as barbaric, but it was, in truth, actually meant to both soften and democratize the previous Near-Eastern codes. These allowed *more* than equal compensation — the death penalty, say, for the wrongful destruction of an eye. They also meted out penalties on a class basis. Loss of an aristocrat's eye might merit the death penalty; a commoner's eye might cost another eye; a

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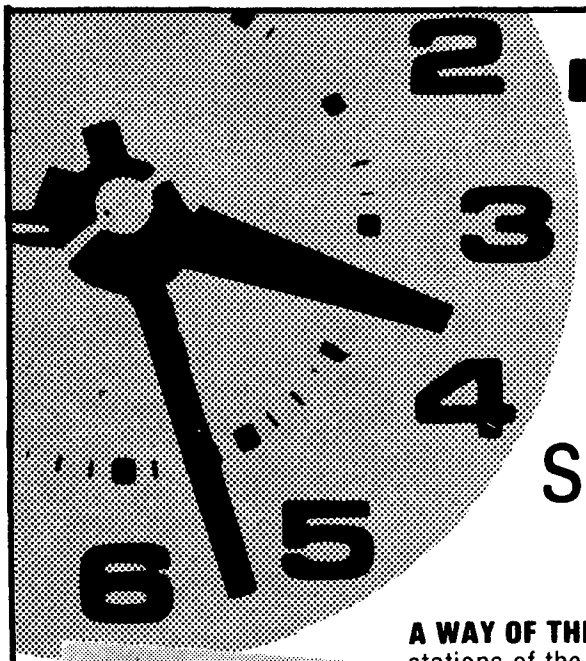

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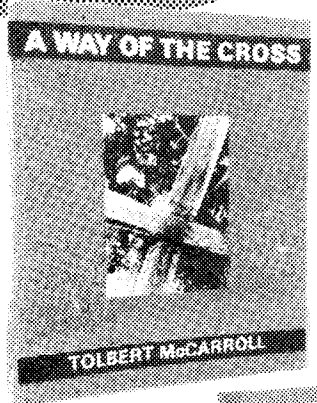

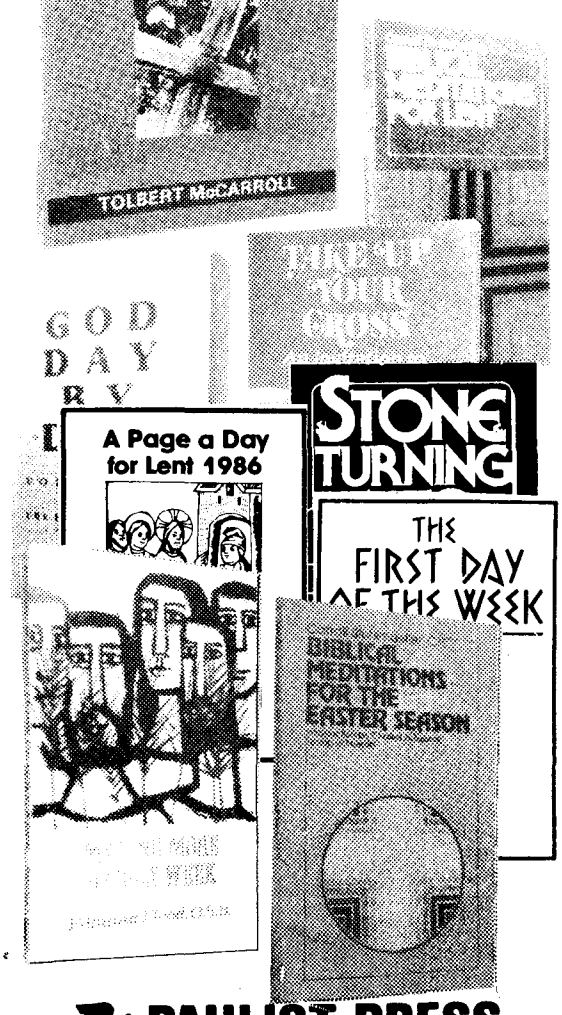
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slave's eye, merely a payment of money. In these terms, our present malpractice compensation system is, if anything, pre-Mosaic. Instead of a distinctly reciprocal amount of compensation for a given injury, it adds on an award for the vague category "pain and suffering." Juries can award no amount, a minimal amount, or a huge amount for the same medical injury, depending on an individual jury's make-up and predilections. This catch-as-catch-can system compares to the inequitable results of pre-Mosaic law codes, rather than a more equitable loss-for-loss approach. The expense incurred to raise a badly damaged child must be provided parents who choose not to make such a child a ward of the state. Malpractice settlements are one, although not necessarily the best, way of doing that. Other ways include direct government subsidies to the parents, tax deductions or credits, expanded and improved systems of free child care and education. But none of this is really compensation for the injury itself — a notion that is actually fairly repulsive. "Pain and suffering" money will not restore the child's well-being, nor give the parents the joy of raising a normal, healthy child. It is not surprising that eliminating or restricting the "pain and suffering" category is one of the staples of recent proposals for malpractice reform.

Reform is all the more obviously needed when one looks at a second major purpose the malpractice system is supposed to be serving. This is essentially a *prospective* purpose, namely to deter physicians, through the threat of punishment, from negligently harming patients in the future. This second rationale behind malpractice suits, in other words, is to force physicians into becoming better physicians while dealing with those who practice bad medicine. There is little evidence, beyond that cited earlier regarding defensive medicine, that this has happened. In many ways, defensive medicine is worse medicine. The threat of malpractice lowers rather than raises the quality of physician performance. And it is the public, both as taxpayers and as medical patients, who largely end up bearing the burden of that "punishment" meant to discipline physicians. The cost of malpractice premiums is passed on to the public; the cost of unnecessary procedures becomes part of the national health bill. If defensive medicine is only half as widely practiced as current estimates would have it, if only 20 percent of our diagnostic tests are unnecessary, or if only $21 billion is being uselessly spent, those still represent huge losses, particularly at a time of retrenchment in health care expenditures.

When it comes to improving physician practice, more direct methods — education and professional peer assessment — are much more likely to succeed than the massive deterrence of malpractice penalties. Better physicians are apt to be created through different types of medical school programs or different admissions standards, by monitoring and acting on consistently poor physician performance through state medical societies and state licensing agencies, or by rapidly removing impaired physicians from patient contact and getting them into treatment. Malpractice litigation, by contrast, can scarcely be an incentive for closer professional scrutiny. It is rather an occasion for circling the professional wagons.

CAUGHT BETWEEN active professional constituencies, (physicians and lawyers, as well as health consumer groups and specialized lobbies such as the American Association of Retired People), government officials have been reluctant to make any bold moves. The Gephardt-Moore bill, sponsored by Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) and W. Henson Moore (R-La.), has been introduced in Congress for the second time. It proposes a number of serious reforms, though for federal health programs only, and is given little chance of serious consideration, much less passage. Its most controversial sections would limit awards to economic loss (medical bills, rehabilitation fees, loss of work income, attorneys' costs), and eliminate awards for "pain and suffering," punitive damages, and other general damages. Though some states (notably California, whose Supreme Court in March 1985 upheld a $250,000 cap on "pain and suffering") have limited non-economic loss awards, none has done so as radically as the Gephardt-Moore proposal. The bill would also offer compensation within six months and let settlements with a loss of over $5,000 be determined by a competent court.

New York State passed a more modest bill last June as an interim measure while a fuller solution was under study. Its major features are a mélange of limitations on lawyers' contingency fees (alleged by physicians to be the stick that whips the legal profession into a frenzy of malpractice litigation); pre-trial disclosure of expert witnesses; a mandatory *offer* of

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arbitration, which the patient would have the right to refuse; future periodic instead of lump-sum payments for awards over $1,000; and imposition of legal costs for frivolous suits. The *New York Times* editorially criticized this interim bill as insufficient, particularly for not limiting awards for "pain and suffering." In a special session last December, the New York legislature failed to pass any further legislation on the subject. That meant that the interim measure's freeze on malpractice premiums was no longer in effect, and one insurance carrier has already applied for a 76 percent increase in rates.

Other solutions have been proposed. In 1978, the Institute of Medicine, the medical section of the National Academy of Sciences, published a study of six alternative systems:

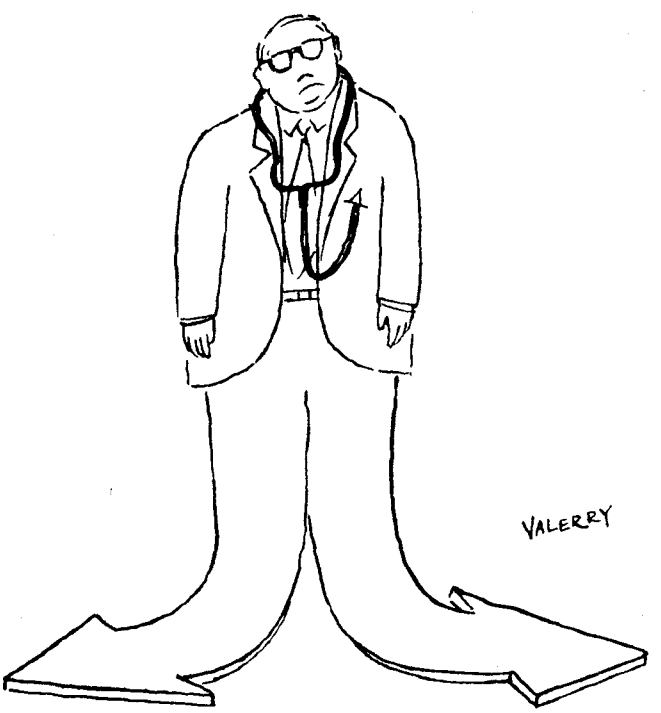
- traditional litigation — the present system;
- pre-trial screening panels — using peer and/or lay review boards to try to halt frivolous suits, suits in which one party is likely to concede, and so on, so as to reduce the burden on the courts and facilitate speedy trials;
- arbitration — again, peer and/or lay review boards working outside the court system to resolve the substantive issues in malpractice claims;
- medical adversity insurance — automatic compensation for injury, to be financed by physicians in some pooling method, with compensation determined by a pre-fixed schedule;
- elective no-fault — use of the same principles currently operating with auto insurance to provide coverage which patients could voluntarily choose, with the further option of court suit;
- social insurance — similar to medical adversity insurance, but publicly financed.

The Institute evaluated these systems by various criteria, from cost to deterrence of injury. It looked for fairness both for injured patients and for providers. With much hesitation it came down in favor of arbitration.

Around the same time Clark C. Havighurst argued persuasively in the *Duke Law Journal* for medical adversity insurance. Injuries would be automatically compensated; the amount of the compensation would be pre-established according to the type of injury. Compensation for injuries not listed could be adjudicated, but it is assumed that the list of "relatively avoidable" medical injuries would be fairly comprehensive. This alternative would remove the threat of outsized (and, in any case, unpredictable) awards. The hooker, of course, is the total expense of the proposal, given the large number of "routine" medical consequences arising in the course of treatment and hospitalization — most of them *not* currently resulting in compensation.

THERE MAY be no perfectly satisfactory alternative to our current malpractice system, but at least part of a solution is at hand. It would include the limitation of malpractice awards to the actual economic burden incurred by injured parties. The Association of Trial Lawyers of America asks, "What is fair compensation for the permanent loss of the use of a child's brain? How do you determine the damages for the permanent loss of sight? How do you compensate for a permanent inability to walk?" The questions are meant to be rhetorical, to oppose limits on awards. Actually, they point in the opposite direction. There can be *no* compensation for permanent loss of a child's brain, for blindness, crippling, etc., per se. What can be determined — although still not without difficulty — is the economic costs of the injury, and that can constitute the settlement. If the cause was negligence, and punitive measures are in order, or if other patients need to be protected, then the physician's license to practice should be limited or removed. If the cause turns out to be, as best we can tell in our present state of knowledge, an unavoidable risk of modern medicine, then there is only the knowledge, many millennia old, that life is tragic and humankind flawed. Penalizing the full community financially, and affecting both its access to care and the quality of its care, in order to deal with the tragedies of some individuals and the failings of others, is neither equitable nor just. Limiting malpractice damages to actual economic costs would be both ethical and practically significant: New York State's largest malpractice insurer, Medical Liability Mutual Insurance Company, reports that the component of "pain and suffering" in all jury verdicts from January 1980 through June 1985 was no less than 55.1 percent of the total awards. In the nine states with a $250,000 cap on awards, average premiums range from 7 percent to 42 percent of the New York State average.

The present system has very little ethical ground on which to stand, other than vengeance, a motive society might want to diminish rather than foster. Careful investigation of alternatives, such as arbitration, social insurance, and medical adversity insurance, should be undertaken before the whole system collapses, and before — in what has now become the typical American approach to health care — we jerrybuild another reform on sand, not rock, and watch it sink in the next storm.



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AN ARAB WAS GOING DOWN TO JERICHO . . .

The abstract enemy

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

IN HIS SMALL masterwork, *The Warriors*, J. Glenn Gray argues that one basic aim of a modern state at war is to establish an image of the enemy as abstract and totalistic as possible in order to distinguish sharply the act of war-time killing from the act of peace-time murder. It is always *the* enemy. The definite article is deployed; we do not talk about *an* enemy, for example. By designating *the* enemy with the definite article, "it" is made to appear a singular, monolithic entity dominated by hostility towards us. This moral absolutism is constructed through language. We are invited to hate without limit and are told we are good citizens for doing so.

Gray insists that there is a drive towards this sort of moral absolutism even in democratic societies, perhaps especially in democratic societies, for popularly elected political leaders must convince the populace of the rightness of a cause in order to gain legitimacy to pursue it—or to pursue it to a "successful" conclusion at any rate. The abstractness of the locution, *the* enemy, promotes the growth of abstract hatred, hence its helpfulness in time of total war. It is not that we are any more savage than our pre-modern forebears, Gray continues; rather, we have more highly developed means to create and to act on abstract hatreds and the simplifications they produce.

Gray, writing in 1959, was worried. On the one hand, total war makes it possible for us to destroy *the* enemy without ever seeing him or her face-to-face; hence abstract hatreds are less likely to be challenged by human contact. On the other hand, with modern communication and travel, perhaps a more realistic and reflective image of potential enemy nations will prevail. It may be increasingly difficult for governments to create believable abstract images of the beast or the devil in respect to whole peoples. Gray hoped so. But he was not terribly confident.

Gray's thesis, philosophically complex, has been recast so often in popular form that it now seems shopworn, perhaps even banal. Subsumed under the injunction to know others as we know ourselves, is the notion that wars begin in the "hearts and minds" of human beings and must there be extirpated if we are to end wars once and for all. The warning against abstracted thinking wears thin and invites well-meaning, but simplistic proposals for intermarriage, cultural exchange, even the use of children as hostages for peace.

That human beings are "pretty much the same the world over," however true at some generic level, seems not terribly helpful when it comes to parsing the geopolitical issues that divide nation-states. Confronted with the tangled density of international relations, those who make foreign policy and those who try to think about it realistically are tempted to dismiss all discussions which probe abstract images of the enemy as well-meaning reiterations of old news. But I discovered recently that probing images of possible or future "enemies" remains a valuable notion, one that need not descend into the willfully innocent fantasy that we can have "relations" with whole nations analogous to those we have with our family and friends.

WITH GRAY'S notion of *the* enemy in mind, I posed a question to a class of some 140 students in a political theory course, "Issues of War and Peace in a Nuclear Age," this past semester at the University of Massachusetts. The question went something like this. Whom can we — we Americans — most likely see as *the* enemy in Gray's sense? Which, among possible future enemies in a war this country might fight, are best candidates for *the* enemy, for fitting under the rubric of a total and hostile Other?

The students played with the question for awhile, bringing forth abstract pictures and then correcting them with more concrete images of the Russians, the Chinese, the Central Americans. Central Americans seemed most familiar—and particular—to the class. The University of Massachusetts is a highly politicized campus. The cultural minister of Nicaragua, Ernesto Cardenal, had just visited and spoken to a large and largely sympathetic audience when I conducted this class exercise. The previous autumn, Robert White, former ambassador to El Salvador, attracted over one thousand students in an appearance at the University. The "valley" (the loose designation for the Connecticut Valley which includes five institutions of higher learning—the University, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, Amherst College, and Hampshire College) is bustling with teach-ins, speeches, courses, and protests about Central America. The sanctuary movement is widely publicized. The involvement of nuns and priests in

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struggles for "peace and justice in Central America," whatever one's position on liberation theology, also touches many students on a campus with a large Catholic population. It would take a lot of concerted, one-dimensional propagandizing to turn "Central Americans," or any particular group among them, into *the* enemy.

The Chinese, according to my students, have become more "human" to us than have the Russians. Images on television show the Chinese hustling and bustling in a way that seems familiar to our speeded-up society. There are many Asian students at the University, including a number from the People's Republic. "Americans love Chinese food," one student chirped. As well, the excesses of the Chinese regime are perhaps less known to us than are those of the Soviet Union. Organized, highly publicized efforts on behalf of Soviet Jews and dissidents are mounted daily in the United States; victims of state repression in China have no such lobbying effort keeping the issue alive and before the public eye. And, for whatever reasons, Mao never struck us as being as demonic as Stalin. "Perhaps," one student remarked soberly, "we hold a racially tinged notion that there are so many Chinese, the loss of a couple of million wouldn't be that big a deal." Other students disagreed, acknowledging that they, too, saw the Chinese as less deadly, less abstract, more human than they did the Russians.

A rough consensus emerged in class, then, that the Russians are less individuated, less concretely and diversely alive to Americans than either Nicaraguans or Chinese. One student said the first image that popped into her mind when Russia or the Soviet Union got mentioned was of a mass of soldiers high-booting it in a stern and disciplined manner under the humorless faces of the Kremlin elite during May Day celebrations in Red Square. "But," she went on, "then I think of television specials about travel down the Volga. Or interviews in which Russians say they most fear war, most want peace. I realize Russians have women and babies and old people, too." So even with the Russians, my students believe it would take a concerted, all-out effort to promote an image of *the* enemy that would justify the barbarities of total, especially nuclear, war.

BUT, it turns out, there is a candidate, a group we now construe in monolithic terms as not only foreign but hostile: *the* Arabs. As soon as a student suggested this possibility, I knew she was right, and the rest of the class concurred. We tend to merge all "Arabs" together. We know very little about the particularities of Arab history and the details of Middle East politics. We figure we owe them for the oil crisis, the Marine barracks, the Iranian hostage situation, the TWA hijack, the *Achille Lauro*. (Let me be clear: the question isn't whether individuals—for example, the hijack killers of Robert Stethem or Leon Klinghoffer — should be brought to justice, but is whether we make no distinction between those designated terrorists and most Arabs in general.)

We have already been desensitized to abstracted thinking in the case of "the Arabs" because we have been bombarded for several years with indiscriminate use of the term terrorist as a way to characterize particular persons *and* whole peoples, for example, the Palestinians. Our media, almost without exception, inculcate stereotypes of Arabs. Political cartoons portray a hook-nosed sheik out to grab Western goodies or blow up Western—or Israeli—planes, leaders, and innocent civilians. In recent popular films, *Protocol* (with ever-bubbly Goldie Hawn), *Into the Night*, and *The Jewel of the Nile*, "the Arabs" are pictured either as crazed fanatics, ill-mannered buffoons and goons, or venal and corruptible clowns. The image we have in our heads of Arabs is of a uniformly ignorant, dirty, and fanatical people.

What it would take to chip away at this abstraction is difficult to say. There are an insufficient number of Arab-Americans to make much headway in protesting popular and media representations of Arabs or in lobbying for nuanced specificity in our responses to all those different peoples and cultures we call "the Arabs." The difficulty of discussing seriously Israeli foreign policy, including our apparently unlimited willingness to supply Israel with all the sophisticated weaponry it wants, without falling under suspicion concerning the depth of one's commitment to Israel's survival, is also implicated in the current state of affairs. The bombing attack on an office of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in California, and threats of violence against Arab-American groups nationwide, provide sobering evidence of attempts to intimidate those working to counter demeaning, culturally-sanctioned images of Arab peoples. Politicians, keenly aware of this fact, choose silence—or they themselves reinforce the popular image of "the Arabs." But this state of affairs is a dangerous one in a democratic society. If we are to go to war we should be clear about whom we are fighting and why. We shouldn't require the false comfort of abstract hatreds.

Screen

MYSTERY & TRAVESTY

BUT ROCKY TO THE RESCUE

ONE THEORY has it that the foreshortening of horizons in America today is leading many to seek solace in "trivial pursuits" or the easy pleasures of generic literature, especially mysteries. Since the early 1970s we have seen the flourishing of the mystery genre in such writers as Amanda Cross, Gregory MacDonald, and the more profound P.D. James; in the legions of private detectives on TV; and now even in *Edwin Drood* on Broadway, complete with its alternate endings to Dickens's unfinished whodunit.

Based on the Parker Brothers' board game of the same

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name, *Clue* tries to cash in on this interest with a similar ploy of three separate endings. (Theaters will indicate whether they are offering conclusion A, B, or C.) The film's makers hope to so enthrall puzzle-loving audiences that viewers will trek to separate theaters to take in the variant conclusions. Of course, a really good mystery has only one solution, the climax of evidence organically integrated with the plot. *Clue*'s mechanically alternate conclusions suggest just how contrived and randomly interchangeable its narrative elements and characters become. Three endings aren't much help without a beginning and middle.

Director Jonathan Lynn probably decided that the only way to film a board game was with high artifice and to employ actors who could carry it off with perfect aplomb. *Clue*'s cast (with the possible exception of Lesley Ann Warren as Miss Scarlet) simply doesn't. Even the fine set, a gorgeous New England country mansion, can't save the film with its visual associations. *Clue* is an elegant disaster, this holiday season's *Titanic*.

YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES, by contrast, makes genuinely creative use of some traditional materials, providing an imaginative and distinctive rendering of the world's most famous detective's first adventure. Conan Doyle provided the rough sources, but here director Barry Levinson *(Diner)* and screenwriter Chris Columbus *(Gremlins)* have collaborated to construct an engaging pre-history of how Holmes got his start. Their idea is a shrewd one. While the young Sherlock and Watson of the film are true enough to the spirit of Conan Doyle, they are also classy versions of today's two ever-present cinematic teen heroes, the suave genius and the fat nerd. *Young Sherlock* reincarnates an old classic both on its own terms and for a new time.

Character is everything here, plot nothing. The two leads are relatively untested English actors, Nicholas Rowe and Alan Cox, but both sustain interest despite a tale (shades of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*) about a vengeful cult of fanatic Egyptians practicing murderous rituals in underground pyramids in central London. Rowe, appropriately long in the nose, makes a superb young detective, managing intellectualilty without precosity, and aplomb without arrogance. He tackles the Egyptian cult as his baptism of fire, acquiring in the process his trademark hat, pipe, and lifelong enemy, Moriarity. In a good synthesis of current marketing and literary backreading, Holmes is also shown exuberantly (and, alas, tragically) in love — an explanation of the detective's later withdrawn loneliness and stoicism.

Young Sherlock does some debunking of its own teenpix mode: its sensuality is chaste, even chivalrous, and its wit is kindly. Most of the latter is focused on Watson, whom Cox plays as a genteel Sancho Panza. The evil cult is given to nasty tricks like inducing nightmarish hallucinations in its victims. When Watson's turn comes, he's alone in a cemetery, surrounded by swirling mists and pointy gravestones. But instead of terror, the chubby Watson fantasizes animated custard tarts coming to life and forcing themselves into his mouth. This special effect provides splendid comic relief and even fits Watson's character.

Sadly, other special effects are too familiar from *Gremlins* and other animated horror shows from the Pixar Computer Animation Group *(Star Wars'* director George Lucas's hi-tech toyshop). Indeed, *Young Sherlock* repeats the weaknesses of those other films from the Lucas-Spielberg empire. The latter is the film's executive producer, and, as in all his works, youth is too pure and winning, age too corrupt and incompetent. Without young Holmes, the evil Egyptian meanies would clearly have their way. Their presence is boringly typical, and marks another chapter in third-world stereotypes in contemporary film.

THE JEWEL OF THE NILE is similarly, but more seriously marred. At first glance, it merely suffers the fate of most sequels that recall the superiority of their original, here *Romancing the Stone*, one of the better action comedies of the last few years. Its strengths include Kathleen Turner as Joan Wilder, a romance novelist who keeps on getting into scrapes as harum-scarum as those of her heroines. Turner's mastery of sweet-and-sour femininity makes *Jewel* an entertaining *Perils of Pauline*. Striking, but not beautiful, Turner seems perfect for her role: she's intelligent enough to look out of place in these crackpot plots, but mischievous enough to enjoy herself thoroughly.

Unfortunately, Turner has co-stars: Michael Douglas, who has reduced his father Kirk's awful charm to just plain awful, and comedian Danny DeVito, vulgar and boring except for one late hilarious line. Worse, they have to battle a monomaniacal Saharan dictator intent on taking over neighboring countries. He stages phony miracles at Nuremberg-style rallies to trick gullible religious fanatics. His spiritual antagonist, a gentle holy man, is played for comic relief, a sort of Sufi Stepin' Fetchit, whose followers bop around to music on ghetto blasters.

Jewel, is short, feeds off an increased awareness of Islam, but travesties its politics, its moral codes, and its rejection of things Western.

FORTUNATELY, *Rocky IV* is here to save us. Some reviewers are saying that this film marks a dangerous turn, a synthesis of Sylvester Stallone's boxing saga with his new interest in geopolitics — *Rambo Razes Russia*. Ah, but they have missed the whole point. Perhaps it is a tribute to Stallone's dazzling subtlety that so many viewers have not realized that *Rocky IV* is actually a shrewd satire on the sources of misunderstanding in world affairs. As a critic, I'd love to possess Stallone's sly ability to say exactly the opposite of what one means.

The clue to Stallone's real intentions, of course, can be found in the obvious misrepresentations with which he peppers the film like a series of deft jabs. Consider the Russian heavyweight, Ivan Drago, against whom the indomitable Rocky is pitted. Played by a Swedish actor named Dolph Lundgren, Drago actually looks less Russian than Nordic, a

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six-foot-seven Superman still on retainer from the SS. Drago trains for his match with Rocky in a gigantic gym endowed with the latest computerized aerobic and fitness equipment. Meanwhile Rocky takes to a Siberian log cabin where he chops wood, does farm chores, and even grows an Abe Lincoln beard. Isn't the satirical message clear? Stallone delivers an elegant symbolic inversion of the actual technological relationship between the superpowers at the same time as he chides each nation's fantasy about itself and its rival. The USSR is no paunch-bellied, aging empire but a hi-tech superstate of Nazi clones. The U.S. — why, we're jes' folks close to the land and don't know nuthin' about computers.

In this light, one begins to see why Stallone so often displays his near-naked body throughout the film. His purpose is to belie his plot. He knows that filmgoers will realize that you can only get such a pumping-iron physique in the gym, not the woods; and that American innocence in such matters is mere pretense. Moreover, he compounds his clues by casting his new bride and recent *Playboy* Playmate, Brigette Nielsen, as the Nordic superwoman girlfriend of Drago; Rocky, naturally, sticks with the reliable but dowdy Adrian (and son). Soviets, he winks, have hot, cosmeticized, superstar sex. Americans, by contrast, have permanently stable family lives.

Stallone allows Rocky to beat Drago, but only to expose the American boxer's narcissism, confusion, and pretension. At the end of the bout, Rocky makes a ridiculous, contradictory speech in which he condescends to praise détente — all the while standing over Drago's bloody body! Clearly Stallone is satirizing the macho absurdity of his hero: peace is good when the enemy is beaten.

The scene also demonstrates the unquestionable status of Stallone (who not only stars in *Rocky IV* but wrote, directed, and produced it) as a genuine cinematic *auteur*. Watching, I could not help but recall the ironic classic that Stallone echoes, a scene from the 1930s British film, *The Four Feathers*. There, C. Aubrey Smith, mutton chops and all, recreates the battle of Balaklava on an English dinner table. Taking a pair of apples, he aligns them and says, "Here was the Russian artillery." Positioning two pears, he says, "Here was the British cavalry." Dipping a finger in claret, he draws a line on the table and declares, "Here was the thin red line" of English infantry. "And here," he concludes, taking a giant pineapple and putting it squarely in the middle, "Here was I."

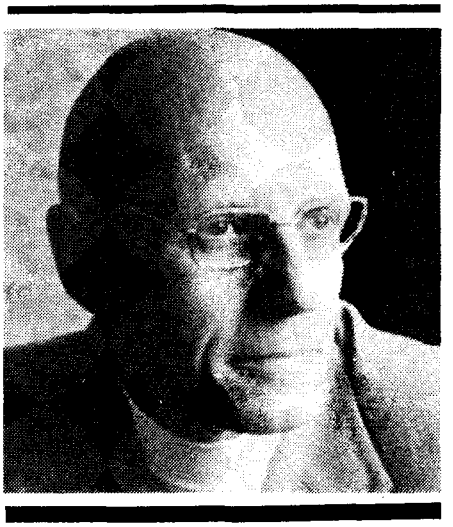
TOM O'BRIEN

MICHEL FOUCAULT'S QUEST FOR FREEDOM

The sounds of silence

JAMES BERNAUER

THE PUBLICATION of an English translation of Michel Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure*. Vol. 2, *A History of Sexuality*, provides the occasion for a brief review of this remarkable thinker's achievement. I enjoyed the good fortune of having had Foucault as a teacher. When I studied with him in 1979 and 1980, he was developing a unique approach to the history of sexuality and arriving at crucial intuitions into how human beings are diminished and governed by modern modes of thought. The book at hand was long delayed and eagerly anticipated; yet the welcome it would have received was transformed into grief when its author died, at the age of fifty-seven, a few days after its appearance in French in the summer of 1984. Along with the leaders of French political and cultural life, the international body of his former students mourned the premature end of their Foucault years. Now, however, that the shock of sudden death has given way to a profound gratitude for the privilege of having had those years, the distressing silence which accompanied the release of this study seems more comprehensible. Foucault's greatest legacy as a teacher was to make his students aware of silences which most of us ignored but he heard, and which gave an urgency to his words and his life: groups not listened to, hopes not articulated, historical memories not expressed, significant dimensions of human experience rendered speechless.



These silences were most frequently created not by repressive forces but by the incessant proliferation of languages which claimed they were saying all that was worth hearing, all that could be known. Language was the arena for the two great forces which his written works explored: power knowledge — the privileged information and expertise which exert power in our lives — and the powers which disguise themselves only as human science. Nowhere were these relations of knowledge to power more influential than in the articulation of the question which our culture demands that we pose to ourselves about ourselves, interrogations regarding the form of our reason, the nature of our finitude, the disciplines for human development, the meaning of our sexuality.

Foucault understood that our pursuit of these questions, formulated in the unique accents modernity has given them, has had the effect of binding us to a defined,

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objective self. This binding has often succeeded in hiding our human incomprehensibility from ourselves, in having the chatter of the trivially knowable deafen the questions born of pain and wonder. In *Madness and Civilization* (1961), he traced how the positive identity of modern reason was forged only by silencing those voices of madness which had called into question for earlier cultures the adequacy of their rationality. The language of psychology conquered those voices and exiled realms of experience, which frequently were signals of transcendence, from our sense of reasonableness, and so from serious discussion.

The Order of Things (1966) explored the system of knowledge from which our current conceptions of finitude derive. It argued that the human sciences, e.g., economics and biology, were crucial in determining the fundamental categories through which we interpret ourselves. We are proud in claiming insight into our temporality, while failing to recognize that modern thought has dispersed time within histories that make us subservient to alien calendars: passing moments of some economic or biological process. Should we be surprised, he asked, by our feelings of alienation? Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) examined how the human sciences helped to give rise to technologies for human improvement whose actual destructiveness was cloaked by benevolent claims. The prisoner's regimented fate is the extreme product of the "carceral archipelago" which modernity has fashioned through the powers which expert schemes exercise in defining our image of human being. It is a world of omnipresent judges, norms, and treatments which we have allowed to tame our strangeness. The mystery of humanity has been imprisoned within cells which provide the illusory comfort of a clear, but impoverished, self-understanding.

Nowhere is this incarceration more subtle than in our modern understanding of sexuality and the programs of "liberation" propagated by it. In the first volume of *A History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976), Foucault argued against the widespread claim that the modern age was a period of sexual repression which we post-Victorians are now overthrowing, indeed, must overthrow. Instead, Foucault showed that the last century has seen an explosion of studies on sex and of interest in unorthodox sexualities, a multiplication of experts concerned with the sexual realm, and the emergence of a specifically modern enterprise to master the truth of sexuality. The originality of this enterprise is to have exploited sexuality as the self's secret which is in constant need of speech about it and expert knowledge for its direction. The consequence of this will to know is to have enshrined sexuality as the central feature of human identity, the seismograph of who we really are.

THE USE OF PLEASURE
VOL. 2: A HISTORY OF SEXUALITY
Michel Foucault
Pantheon, $17.95, 320 pp.

A HISTORY OF SEXUALITY
VOL. 1: AN INTRODUCTION
Michel Foucault
Vintage, $4.95, 192 pp.

MADNESS AND CIVILIZATION
A HISTORY OF INSANITY IN THE AGE OF REASON
Michel Foucault
Vintage, $5.95, 320 pp.

THE ORDER OF THINGS
AN ARCHEOLOGY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES
Michel Foucault
Vintage, $5.95, 448 pp.

DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH
THE BIRTH OF THE PRISON
Michel Foucault
Vintage, $6.95, 352 pp.

The learned tones of the sexual discussion which babbles throughout our culture would amuse if its tragic results were not so evident. In place of human beings capable of love, our knowledge has produced a menagerie of separate species with sexual names: homosexuals and heterosexuals, normal and perverse. The struggle for human freedom, for the discovery of ourselves as responsible actors in the world, gets diverted into such personally misleading and politically innocuous campaigns as sexual liberation, whatever that means this season. The question which dominated Foucault's last years was how our culture ever developed such an experience of human life that we would seek in sex what is most meaningful and true about our selves. How did we come to desire this modern prison cell of our self?

The Use of Pleasure, the second volume in his history of sexuality, possesses a double importance for this question. First, it outlines a program for how the complex history of Western sexuality should be studied. Foucault shifts the investigation from the level of moral codes and conduct to a series of interrogations aimed at discovering how the self is articulated as a moral being in relation to sexuality. What is the nature of the domain specifically grasped and mapped as sexual? To what form of privileged knowledge is the self subjected in dealing with sexuality? What is the precise form of asceticism proposed to the moral agent and what purposes is it meant to serve? The second achievement of this volume is to show how the Greek experience of sexuality silently distorts our fundamental approach to the whole sexual domain.

Not unexpectedly, it is Plato who looms largest here. For Foucault, Plato transformed into an issue of truth the dilemma posed to an earlier Greek ethic of how to use pleasure by its most significant sexual relationship, namely, the love between men and boys. Inasmuch as there was an isomorphism between social relations and sexual relations in that culture, the boy, as a future citizen, destined to active self-governance, could not permit himself to be reduced to the level of a passive object of pleasure. The normal dilemma found itself transformed in Plato's *Symposium*: the question of proper sexual conduct is replaced by the question of the being of love itself; the issue of how the honor of the boy is to be preserved in sexual love is changed into the question of one's love for the truth;

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the dissymmetry of the partners is overcome by a mutual love of the truth; the central concern about boys and their virtue is replaced by the need to cherish the master of love.

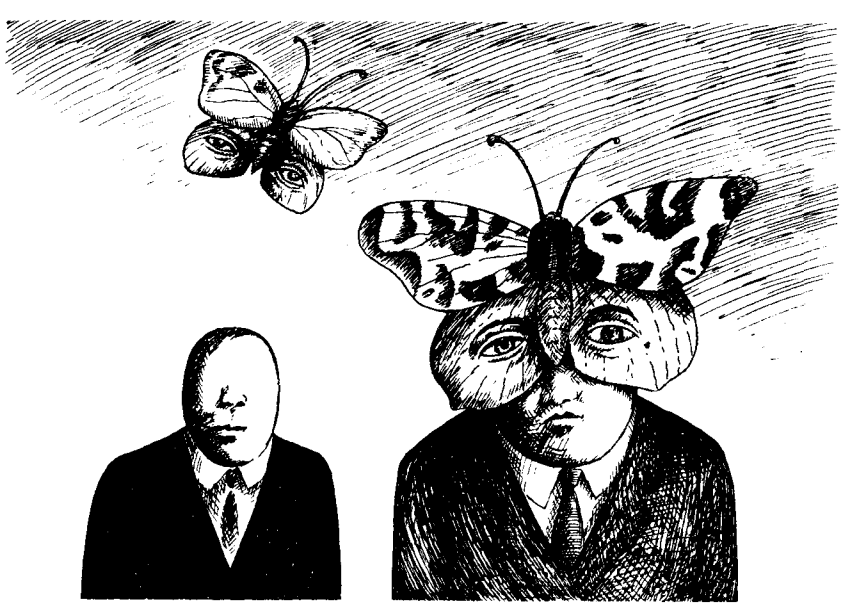
Although the differences in approach to sexuality among Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures are touched upon in this volume, Foucault's analysis of them is presented in the next two volumes of the series. A translation of his study of the Roman transformation of Greek experience will be issued in the fall of 1986 as *The Care of the Self*. This volume is less signficant than his examination of Christian sexuality which has yet to be released in France but which will carry the title *Confessions of the Flesh*. Although Greek and Roman experience fashioned a culture of the self, only Christianity, with its practices of confession and examination of conscience, constituted the self as a hermeneutical reality whose truth must be uncovered by a permanent process of self-interpretation and diagnosis of the truths and illusions operating within the self.

Christian pastoral techniques were taken over by the modern period and form the roots of its own exploration of the self, most especially of the self's sexual being as a truth to be enunciated. The modern period discarded, however, the critical ascetical spirit in Christianity which continually undermined any temptation to assert a mastery of the self in an objective science. Without such an intellectual asceticism, the modern exploration of the self fabricated a human figure who could be defined by the so-called human sciences and whose moral conduct ought to be governed by this knowledge. Modernity's counsel is to identify with this figure rather than with one's transcendence of any particular culture's image of the human. The extraordinarily powerful modern alliance of knowledge, power, and sexuality is thus experienced not as a force to be wary of and to be resisted but as the natural terrain in which to grasp our intelligibilty. The search for who we are and what we ought to become is taken hostage by our culture's "true" sciences.

Michel Foucault was a thinker of prodigious passion and his words frequently flash with intense feelings and shrill formulations. He once expressed his astonishment to me about the violent denunciations his works sometimes provoked. I was surprised, for how could it be otherwise? His work sabotages both our culture's official portrait of the human being and the authority of the human scientists who are its guardians. He pressed on them a series of invitations: to look beyond apparently liberal values to the many social and political strategies with which they merge and within which they might play roles not originally anticipated for them; to be more conscious of the limits of our modern sciences and of their ability to tell us who we are; to be less trusting that current concepts of freedom and dignity are self-evident and do not bring with them different enslavements. Behind his attacks on systematic knowledge often regarded as beyond question was a deliberate strategy of subversion. He succeeded in conveying to his listeners and readers a feeling of entrapment within cages of ideas that would not be easy to escape. The rhetorical excess which sometimes accompanied that subversion often irritated and distracted critics from his purpose, which always remained liberation.

Foucault's own quest for freedom should be of assistance to Christian thinkers in at least two areas. First, he outlines a historical approach to Christian sexuality, but not just in the sense of following the changes in the church's teaching of it. More significantly, his analysis will press the question of the different meanings which sexuality carries in various historical periods and the different functions it fulfills in an age's understanding of how the subject develops as a moral being. Secondly, Foucault warned of the "blackmail of the Enlightenment," by which he meant the danger of identifying enlightenment with the forms of knowing and the types of institutions developed in a particular historical period rather than with a permanent attitude of criticism. He urged an escape from the immaturity which canonizes specific historical solutions as eternal responses to the dilemma of human existence. His counsel is timely when so many wish to flee either from the Middle Ages into an embrace of the modern or from the present into an imaginary golden age of primitive Christianity. Our contemporary experience is precisely that, ours, and as such it invites new forms of reflections and new paths for the practice of freedom.

Foucault evoked a strong personal loyalty from his students. We felt privileged in witnessing an immense intelligence struggle for a form of thought which could be radically critical and authentically freeing. That struggle led his mind beyond the paralyzing din of so much current knowledge to voices which were not heard. It even led him to the talk of theologians. In 1980 he asked me to arrange a private meeting with several of



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them so that he could discuss his research on Christian experience. Neither a formal religious believer nor a trained theologian, this former student of the Jesuits appeared totally at ease discussing Augustine and Cassian, sin and confession. That meeting remains my most vivid memory of him. He was a man for whom no historical epoch, no intellectual language, no human passion could ever become a forbidden territory for his own restless questioning. I appreciate now why his ease with those theologians was so memorable for me. Perhaps it only presaged for him a deeper comfort to come, a final homecoming, a surrender of his self not to the silence of death but to the Word of Life.

Books: FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

THE POLITICS OF SEX AND RELIGION
A CASE HISTORY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE, 1962-1984

Robert Blair Kaiser
Leaven Press, $10.95, 263 pp.

Robert G. Hoyt

SOME years ago, during a brief visit to my home, a then-famous politician scanned the bookshelves in our living room, pulled out a paperback, checked the index, and pronounced it a bad book: only a couple of page references appeared after his own name. A difference between my guest and me is that I waited for privacy before flipping through my copy of the book under review — a reporter's retelling of the Catholic birth control debate over the past two decades — in search of references to myself. There are some. They include some flattering remarks about the work of the *National Catholic Reporter* at a time when I was its editor. Also, a passage the author quotes from the *NCR* editorial responding to Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is the very one I would have chosen. There could be no better way to induce bias, which is why I make this disclosure.

But then, reading the Introduction, I thought for a while I would not be able to recommend the book. It has the tone of bland, *Time*-style advocacy journalism, which achieves its effects through the use of flavorful but low-fiber adjectives instead of chewier nouns and verbs. (Robert Blair Kaiser was a Rome correspondent for *Time* in the early sixties.) One learns all too soon who will figure as the heroes of the story, fighting for democracy, pluralism, openness, and freedom in the church, and who are the villains desperately trying to hang on to their power by manipulating old anathemas. And the Introduction closes with a one-liner that comes too soon and says too little: "This is really a story of how the people of God grew up, and in a very few years." *Mais oui, Monsieur Candide.*

In the rest of the book, fortunately, Kaiser's analysis emerges mostly out of the events he records; so do his characterizations of the principal players and of what was at stake for them. On those parts of the story of which I have independent knowledge, I found his reporting essentially accurate. Though I haven't read all the other accounts, I suspect that this one contains more information about the inner workings of the papal birth control commission, the book's principal focus, than any other.

And the book is interesting: a considerable feat. Because his account is meticulously chronological, Kaiser has to rehash arguments everyone interested in the topic has heard many times before, about the biological, medical, demographic, sociological, psychological, spiritual, and ethical aspects of birth control. There is much new detail about the commission's members and procedures, but most of it corresponds to and merely fleshes out what is already known. And, of course, the story lacks all suspense.

There is, then, some tedium to be endured. What compensates for it is the fascination of observing minds changing, and of seeing new issues emerge out of the process. The same thing happened more publicly in the Second Vatican Council, but on a scale too grand for this kind of close examination. On their appointment most commission members thought they had been assigned a public relations task: not to question the ban on contraception but to repackage it. Ever so slowly, with many false starts, and yet with a certain inevitability (given their brains and their integrity), they redefined their mission; some redefined their own identities as Catholics, and as human beings acting in history. One thinks particularly of the Chicago couple Pat and Patty Crowley: Deeply but conventionally loyal Catholics, they found themselves growing out of their automatic deference to theologians, bishops, and cardinals, able to join the struggle and make themselves heard, to no small effect. As the author suggests, scholars specializing in the history of ideas, even those not much interested in religion, will profit from studying this skillful record, reflecting as it does the interplay of personality, character, vested interests, accidents of timing and physical circumstance, all mixed in with the influence of learning, logic, force of language, and intellectual gamesmanship.

Unlike the contraception debate, other issues that came to the surface are still very much on the current agenda for many Catholics. Among them: papal infallibililty and the uses of papal authority (or, more broadly, the distribution of power in the church and the modes by which it is wielded); the limits, if any, of the magisterium's capacity to discern and legislate morality on the basis of natural law; and, perhaps most importantly, the relevance of history and culture to ethical reasoning.

Two examples of the latter: the influence on traditional views about women, sex, and marriage of the intellectual and social context in which they were formed; the obstacles placed in the way of ethical reappraisal by the centralization of teaching authority. Thus, a generation ago most Catholics would have thought Kaiser's subtitle at war with his

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title — what has "politics" to do with "development of doctrine"? The post-conciliar answer is: Plenty. The church is inevitably and intensely a political institution, even or especially in the processes by which its dogmas and disciplines are formed and re-formed. That came home with special force to most members of the birth control commission, as it will to readers of this book.

For some, of course, the church thus demythologized no longer holds any interest; they have opted out of the continuing struggle to understand and shape the Catholic (or any other) institutionalization of the Gospel. It must be said that Pope Paul's decision to restate and reaffirm the ban on contraception — or, more accurately, the banality of the encyclical through which he conveyed his decision — contributed greatly to that result. Kaiser reports what can be learned about how this gentle and intelligent man, who had constantly upheld the freedom of his commissioners to explore new paths, could rob their findings of all weight merely because the vote was not unanimous and because "certain criteria" adopted by the majority "departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the church" (paragraph 6).

Here villains abound, Cardinal Ottaviani of the Holy Office and the American Jesuit John Ford chief among them. For me, what does not emerge with sufficient force from Kaiser's account is the depth of the *intellectual* scandal created not only by that astonishing paragraph but by the contorted reasoning of the encyclical as a whole. Knowing the personal, social, and demographic costs, knowing that not even the principal authors of *Humanae Vitae* believed that its argument led to moral certitude, the pope still asked docile acceptance. For anyone brought up in the rationalist stream within the Catholic tradition, that was indeed a shocker: a kind of corruption at the core.

To be sure, the scandal was mitigated somewhat by the forthright responses of some Catholics, including those national hierarchies that "accepted" the encyclical but by their interpretation deprived it of binding force for individual couples. And there is no doubt that because of this revelatory episode in the life of the church some Catholics achieved a more mature understanding of moral law and the role of conscience. But this personal growth doesn't clear up the institutional mess that has been created, which weakens the church's credibility on abortion and other moral issues and dampens hope that disciplinary questions such as celibacy and the standing of women in the church can ever be addressed on their merits. Further, the new enlightenment of some educated Catholics in the developed world contributes little to an easing of the problem of overpopulation, nothing to the progress of ecumenism. Thus, the implication in Kaiser's Introduction that the story has a happy ending seems to me doubly wrong: The story is more sad than happy, and it hasn't ended.

One of the sadder aspects is that Karol Wojtyla, then bishop of Cracow, now John Paul II, bishop of Rome, took no part in the work of the birth control commission, though he was appointed to it. He's not going to read this book. I hope that many others will, particularly the bishops who went to Rome for the synod. It was the barons, not King John, who took the initiative leading to the Magna Carta.

Describing the peace & the patience

JOZEF MAK

Jozef Cíger-Hronský

Translated by Andrew Cincura
Slavica Publishers (P.O. Box 14388, Columbus, OH 43214), $12.95, 232 pp.

Holly Metz

JOZEF MAK, the second novel of the early twentieth century Slovak writer Jozef Cíger-Hronský, has just now been published in an English translation — more than sixty years after its first printing in the author's homeland. The neglect of this writer's work — considered by scholars to be some of the finest Slovak lyrical prose of this century — was consciously exercised, until its "rehabilitation" in the 1960s, when it was again published in Czechoslovakia. But one must also recognize the cultural chauvinism of English language readers which sustains ignorance.

The publication of *Jozef Mak* by Slavica Publishers should serve to encourage interest in Central European literature. It will also discourage it. Interspersed throughout the text are footnotes that direct the reader to the back of the book, and further explanations of Slovak history and customs. But frequently one finds that these explanations, with their specificity, confound the reader not familiar with Slovak language, or its traditions. A brief synopsis of recent Slovak history might bolster the effectiveness of the footnotes.

Thankfully, the reader need not initially pursue such references in order to enjoy this lyrical vision of village life, into which one is immersed from the very first page. Through an amorphous green dawn a white figure appears at the wooden cottage where the illegitimate Jozef Mak has just been born. All night, the white figure "that has no body but only hands, bleeding from their pierced palms, and wise and good eyes," has been giving presents to the "quiet men and women" of the village. Because poor Jozef Mak has "no one waiting for him except his mother's fright," and therefore no presents, the figure gives him its hands, saying "Take them, but don't expect a mouth to match them, not even when you grow up and understand people, and they try to persuade you that you should also get a voice somewhere."

Symbols are interwoven with the lives of realistically drawn characters, revealing the villagers' unconscious integration of both the spiritual and the sensual; they are used to explain thoughts and events to the reader, that the inarticulate, "ordinary" (as common as *mak,* the poppyseed) Jozef cannot speak of. (University of Columbia professor Peter Petro suggests in his helpful afterword that Hronský may have disbelieved in the power of the word.) Included in the Slavica publication are four black-and-white renderings by Alexander Rud-

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insky, which competently depict different scenes from the book.

Mostly, it is Mak's crucified hands that appear throughout the story — not as an image, but as a reality: Jozef Mak must continuously travel to sell his labor as a lumberjack's helper, as a digger for the railroad — anything — merely to exist in a world, where, alone, he has "no voice." In this, Mak could be Everyman. Thus, Mak's wife Jula asks herself, "Are there any countries in this world where a person is not forced to leave his native village and go to work out in the world? Where mothers and sons are not left without husbands and fathers?"

And yet, Mak can clearly represent the Slovak people, writes Norma L. Rudinsky, general editor of the Slovak literature and language series that this book inaugurates. In the book's preface she mentions that the Slovak people sustained themselves with their "laboring hands and the nearly inarticulate though beautiful voice of (their) folk art" during the "tragic political and economic conditions that followed the breakup of the Great Moravian Empire."

This is not, however, a political novel, and although Jozef Mak is aware of the occasional resistance of others to injustice and servitude, he never considers rebellion. Less than resignation, or an embrace of suffering, Mak carries an infinite human patience, an unrealized sense that wisdom is possible for the ordinary person, but is only achieved through life's trials.

Jozef Mak is replete with observations of human behavior — small, wise observations. So, when the young Jozef Mak returns from the military service to find that his lover, Marusa, has married his half brother, and finds too, that he has to share a cottage with them, the reader is prepared for tension. But Hronský reveals more — fidelity, sacrifice — in the figure of Marusa (later depicted quite differently) who kneels by the bed she shares with her husband, knowing that Jozef is across the room, awake: "Marusa was stronger than Jozef Mak, and she lay down next to her husband only after Jozef Mak had fallen asleep." Hronský's sensitive and complicated treatment of his female characters is notable.

Later, the author uses the image of a sleeping child to describe the peace felt by Jula, Jozef's wife: "Then everything around her came to rest, because a child with dried milk on its lips is a powerfully strong force that can sometimes accomplish what a hundred adults cannot."

In Hronský's depiction of village life there are no miracles — he never sentimentalizes: "The candles, gilt, and statues tried as hard as they could to help her, but their desperate efforts were futile because gilt and statues are no longer permitted to move or speak, the age of miracles having long since passed away." But he does show that an ordinary man can experience what James Joyce called an epiphany (with a small "e"), transcendence through the everyday. Therefore Jozef Mak becomes aware of his unity with other men, their common humanness, while in his village church, where no miracles occur: "Jozef, no one in church will notice who you are, that you are Mak. Everything here will become the same as soon as the dragging hymn flows over their heads, for everyone here is like you and you are like all the others. We are a forest: tree next to tree — and only that is important which waters the roots equally and which rocks the treetops in unison. You are not just Jozef Mak, you're the whole village." One is reminded of Thomas Merton's epiphany on a Louisville street corner, when he felt thankful that he was only one man among others, "that they were mine, and I theirs." The epiphany of Jozef Mak, the villager, transcends time and space.

But to believe that this state will be permanent is the stuff of novels. At the close of the book Hronský speaks directly to the miserable Jozef Mak, whose wife has died: "In a novel something would happen to remove Jozef Mak from the world. But life is not a novel! Life is a cliff, a valley, mountain, tree stumps, an ax, bread, and hoarfrost, and all those things are not just pieces of scenery and stage props which one can move about to suit one's fantasy. So you cannot disappear just like that, Jozef Mak."

And so the character Jozef Mak remains with the reader, inarticulate still. He is "just one of millions, a mere statistic," but he is one who endures.

The novel *Jozef Mak* has endured, too; though there have been years of neglect. It waits patiently to tell a story at once cruel and hopeful, to a whole new world of readers.

An awkward fit

THE LOST SOUL OF AMERICAN POLITICS
VIRTUE, SELF-INTEREST, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF LIBERALISM

John P. Diggins
Basic Books, $23.95, 409 pp.

Dick Howard

THE BEMUSED dispatches of the first French ambassador to the rebel colonies whose *de facto* independence was assured by the French alliance in 1778 can serve to introduce John P. Diggins's quest for a "lost soul" of American politics. In one of them, he explains that the colonials have the same self-seeking passions he knew from home, yet they lack the manners which make "ours" tolerable. In another, he shows exasperation at the greed that permitted American merchants to traffic shamelessly with the enemy. A third dispatch goes to the heart of American politics. Evidence of dissension within the army and the misfunctioning of the Confederal Congress had sparked rumors of a *coup*. But no, this would not be, reasoned the diplomat: exactly that pettiness he had described explains why ambitious men turn their attention anywhere but to the political arena.

Three schools have dominated the debate among historians of the American Revolution. The oldest is the "progressive" orientation best known through Charles A. Beard's "economic interpretation" of the Constitution. Its forty-year dominance was replaced by the "consen-

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sus theory'' in the 1950s. Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* is its most complete presentation. The Framers, insisted Hartz, had indeed stressed conflict — for example, in Madison's 10th *Federalist* of which Beard made so much — but this was deceptive. The fact that the Framers neglected the underlying liberal consensus only reflected how deeply and thoroughly it shaped American politics—and could be taken for granted. America, said Hartz, was ''born free.'' No feudalism, no socialism — such was the message of the liberalism of the 1950s. More recently the pathbreaking work of Bernard Bailyn (*The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Belknap/Harvard, $18.50, paper $6.75, 343 pp.) and Gordon Wood (*The Creation of the American Republic*, Norton, $25, 653 pp.) presented an alternative which could tempt the radical as well as the conservative. At the basis of the revolution Bailyn and Wood found a tradition of republican humanism founded on political virtue which sacrifices private interest for the public good.

Diggins demurs. His search for the ''lost soul'' has brought him to a ''belated appreciation of an older Marxist and Progressive perspective emphasizing conflict.'' But he is himself neither a Marxist nor a Progressive; his is a ''Niebuhrian corrective to the pretensions of American virtue.'' What this means is often unclear, but usually interesting.

Diggins begins with the historical foundations of American politics. His Framers are not the Lockean liberals stressed in the fifties; nor are his revolutionary Founders the virtuous republicans of Bailyn and Wood. Diggins is especially critical of the latter, whom he accuses (in lengthy appendices) of the methodological error of taking rhetoric too seriously. ''Who's afraid of John Locke,'' he asks? In place of an answer, he demonstrates amply that the revolutionary generation was well aware of the role of self-interest and economic conflict. But what does this realism say about their theory of politics?

The liberals and the humanists are said to share an attitude towards politics: it

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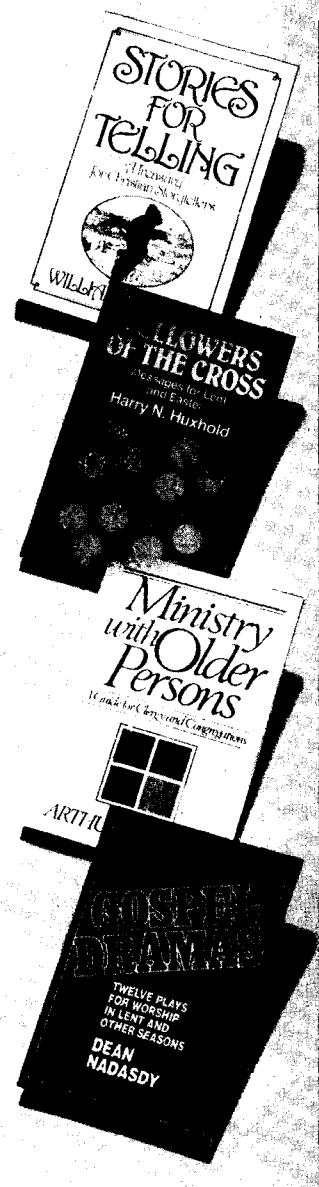
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should be free from private moral passion. Daniel Boorstin's explanation of the "genius" of American politics stresses its refusal of ideology and willingness to compromise. J.G.A. Pocock's civic humanists (in *The Machiavellian Moment,* Princeton, $48, 576 pp.) point to Machiavelli's willingness to risk his soul for the sake of the City. Diggins uses the Lincoln-Douglas debate to illustrate the resulting dilemma. Douglas hated slavery as much as did Lincoln; but he refused to risk the political unity of the country for the (presumably private) moral cause of its abolition. Both consensus and civic humanist views ought to honor Douglas, therefore, over Lincoln.

Lincoln, in fact, is Diggins's exemplary hero. He restores good and evil to political discourse; he rejects the distinction between public and private, politics and religion. To what did Lincoln appeal? "Four score and seven years ago . . ." was 1776! Lincoln was willing to impose political unity to preserve the principles of the Declaration of Independence. (Diggins doesn't mention that the South could have justified secession by that same Declaration, as did Jefferson and Madison in their conflict with the administration of John Adams.) The Declaration has no legal standing in the American political system. Yet Lincoln has not been the only radical to appeal to the "inalienable rights" it affirms. This must have some relation to the "lost soul," but Diggins doesn't come right out with it.

Clearly, the rights that ground Lincoln's moral Republic are not the liberal rights to property and to the "pursuit of happiness" in private life. Nor are they found in that civic virtue that the humanists want to stress. Both orientations stress the protection of property, as either the product of free labor or as the condition permitting virtuous action. But Diggins shows that by the nineteenth century, "virtue" had become a feminine quality to be nurtured in the privacy of the family. Labor was becoming industrial, and was hardly free. But Americans continued to labor and to pursue property as happiness. They lived, says Diggins, a Protestant ethic without the transcendent justification which had animated their ancestors. Having noted this lowered vision, Diggins's quest for the "lost soul" turns toward the search for a legitimation which could replace the lost transcendence provided by religion.

Diggins is searching for what might be called a legitimating culture of political morality. He finds only its shell, a conflict-ridden liberalism where private interest has replaced public virtue. For Franklin's heirs, work, not politics, is the highest human activity; the technological intelligence that conquers nature replaces the historical wisdom that founds the City. Nineteenth-century reform turned inward; Emerson despised and Thoreau pitied the politician; Tocqueville noted that where the individual is defined by a society of self-achievers there is no possibility of self-sacrifice for the public good. When Dewey tried to renew the reforming impulse, he turned ultimately to the education of the private individual. Meanwhile, the world of conflict stemming from private-interest liberalism continued, as did the injustice, and the protest against it.

Diggins neither defines nor tells us how to recover the "lost soul." Stern Calvinism is surely a fundamental ingredient, but not the only one. His essay is cautionary and negative, if not downright pessimistic. Classical political republicanism, Diggins agrees, is more noble; but liberalism, he observes, is more attainable. Are we then to live with liberalism?

Something like an answer is suggested in the book's final chapter which presents a reinterpretation of Melville's tale of Billy Budd. Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* (Penguin, $6.95) had offered a brilliant interpretation of this tale as justifying the primacy of politics over private morality when Captain Vere decides that he must hang the morally innocent Billy for the good of the whole. Diggins reads the tale from Billy's side. Melville, Diggins claims, is condemning Vere, a desiccated intellect caught in abstractions. Diggins cites Melville: "Billy ascended; and, in ascending, took the full rose of the dawn." The wooden spar from which he was suspended is sought by the sailors as "a piece of the cross." He then continues the religious motif through an interlude dealing with Henry Adams's passage from Washington muckraker to mystical devotee of the Virgin in his *St. Michel and Chartres.* The chapter concludes with Lincoln with whom, "American political thought ascended, and, ascending, reached spiritual ecstasy."

To be left with such "spiritual ecstasy" is rather disappointing. Perhaps the wisdom of the worldly French Ambassador should be reconsidered. Abrasive manners, aggressive private profiteering, and uninspiring political opportunities: was that the — was that a — Revolution? The Frenchman talked little about freedom, and he returned home before the new Constitution of 1787 stabilized the Republic. For some contemporaries as well as for later historians like Beard, as perhaps even for Lincoln, that Constitution was a counter-revolution against the principles of the Declaration. We still live under and with its liberal institutions. Is that why politics today has remained a petty, uninspiring vocation for our liberal society?

The iconoclasm of which Diggins is so proud consists in his stress on the reality of material interests underlying proclaimed ideals. But the "lost soul" is clearly just such an ideal. The two themes sit awkwardly together, and are never reconciled. The reason may be that Diggins is seeking their unification in a culture of political morality, where culture and morality dominate over politics. Perhaps, as it was for the Framers whose realism he so admires, the solution may lie in a rethinking of politics and its peculiar American institutional forms. That, however, would require a different book.

REVIEWERS

ROBERT G. HOYT *recently resigned as editor of* Christianity and Crisis *and is now a free-lance writer, editor, and consultant.*

HOLLY METZ *has just completed a book on war resisters of the 20th century.*

DICK HOWARD *teaches in the philosophy department at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He is director of Euro-Links, and author of the forthcoming* From Marx to Kant *(SUNY Press).*

DAVID TOOLAN *is both assistant editor and book editor of* Commonweal.

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Mary Ann Coleman

Photographs, Lives

An old photograph at the beach.
Mother, ocean in sepia.
Caught in your long-legged bathing suit
you wanted the bathing cap off
but the photographer's brows thickened.
Father wanted to get on with it.
Vanity and conscience tugging
at the ligaments of the spirit,
you never flinched.
Not one hair escapes its confinement.
Your eyes as green as malachite
set in ornamental ibis,
Father played the curator
to your beauty.

Sea froth, surfaces of days
before his voice shook the house
like machine guns from an old war.
Before the migraines came,
a thorn crown on your perfect head.

Years later he lies inland, fractured,
near the limbs of ancestors.
His bald eyes, his granite teeth,
king of his own sarcophagus.

Another photograph. You smile
at the same insistent sea,
age streaming from your face.
Your hair takes on the gleam of milk.
Around the edges of the photographs
waves simmer on land's margin.

Nancy G. Westerfield

The Album

Hold still now, mother and father,
While I wipe your pictures: the ones
With each other and then with us,
The daughters who dust now, each
In her proper house, the family faces.
The family plot swells fecund with spring
Too far away for any to visit
On Memorial Day; only this second glance
Into the old collection suffices, remarking
Again the datedness of your dress and hair,
Mother, photographed four decades past,
And the fume of my father's long since
Burnt-out cigar. How stalwart you waited,
Mother, while he was reduced to ash, the long
Glowing cigar of himself, praying no doubt
Some maternoster you knew of your own,
The urn already chosen scrolled over
With its Greek-key design. Nothingness
Is what the key opens, and the prayers
You lined out for us: honor thy father
And mother. Thus I honor: with dustcloth
And balm for the book's leather cover,
As much of yourselves as is left
Lingering in a last sidelong look from the pictures,
Beloved father, dear mother, the hand-written
Names binding us strangers together.

E.B. deVito

Something in You

Something in you:
a tilt of head,
lifts a veil
on the half-forgotten view
of another you.

Like Bonaparte
exchanging one island
for another;
like Harpo Marx
with, somewhere in his background,
the tiny woman with a half-sized harp
and Ernest Jones,
recognizing suddenly
his new home to be almost a replica
of the house where he was born,

something in you
can make me see
the absurdity
of Wolfe's
"You Can't Go Home Again,"
when each day
in some unlooked-for way,
over and over, it is shown
you cannot keep
from going home.

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In brief

QUANTUM REALITY: BEYOND THE NEW PHYSICS, *by Nick Herbert. Anchor/ Doubleday, $16.95, 268 pp.*

For those who enjoyed (or missed) Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1975) or Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (1979), and want a no-nonsense update on the world of quantum physics without entanglements with Eastern metaphysics, I recommend Herbert's book. A physicist himself, Herbert gives a lively, comprehensible account of the theoretical and experimental developments which lead to the quantum "facts," including the very disconcerting Bell's Theorem (which supposes signals faster than the speed of light). He focuses in on the eight (yes, eight) major interpretations of what kind of "reality" — if any — stands behind all the fuss. In short, the author's interest is epistemological and, implicitly, ontological: what does the new physics tell us about reality? The author's own critically realist bias is forthright, but the other verdicts are given fair and accurate hearing. The subtitle, "Beyond the New Physics," is publisher's hype. Only marginally does Herbert get into the complexities of "grand unification" theory. But for the sake of mathematical idiots like myself, I wish he would.

D.T.

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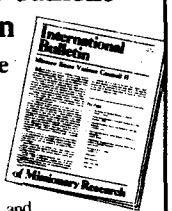

This report is the product of three private meetings that took place over a period of seven years, 1977-1984, in Venice, Cambridge, and Landévennec, France.

Participants include:

Peter Beyerhaus	Joan Chatfield
Harvie Conn	Joan Delaney
Orlando Costas	Pierre Duprey
David Hubbard	Basil Meeking
Gottfried Osei-Mensah	Jorge Mejia
Peter Savage	Pietro Rossano
John R. Stott	Thomas F. Stransky

Excerpt: ". . . it has been a search for such common ground as might be discovered between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as they each try to be more faithful in their obedience to mission."

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 2)

woman also knows her place in the universe, even if it doesn't fit with contemporary feminist rhetoric: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

Unlike her cousin's husband, the priest Zechariah, serving in the great temple in Jerusalem, Mary believes the angel of the Lord. She has faith. Even more importantly, she anticipates the "Thy will be done" of the "Our Father" — our most fundamental prayer and response to God the Father. She says, "Let it be done to me according to your word."

Jesus tells us the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor. Mary arose and "went with haste" to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

There is no false humility in Mary. "Henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

But, again, she reminds us of the reason for her greatness: "He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. . . . He who is mighty has done great things for me."

Mary highlights the Lord's preferential option for the poor. "He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty."

From the beginning, Mary knew there would be a sign of contradiction in following her child. Jesus "is set for the fall and rise of many . . . a sign that is spoken against. A sword will pierce through your own soul."

Later Jesus tells us how we can become close to him like his mother because she does the will of God. "Anyone who does the will God, that person is my brother, and sister, and mother."

But Mary knows there are times to celebrate, to keep the party going as at the wedding feast at Cana. She is sensitive to others' needs. She told Jesus, "They have no wine."

While almost all the apostles abandoned Jesus, Mary, his mother, Mary Magdalene, and the other women shared the agony of the crucifixion. But Jesus had a special concern for his mother. "Son, behold thy mother."

Vatican II, in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *(Lumen Gentium)*, concludes with a section on Mary and her role in the church. It's worth reading again. It says the faithful "turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth in the *whole* community of the elect as the model of virtues."

LARRY GRADY

Either/or

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: James McCue's review of *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Promise of Christian Theology* by A. Paul Santmire [October 4] recalled one item in the quite large file of letters that I never got around to writing to the *New York Times* which editorialized upon the subject some years ago.

I am sick unto death of hearing that Christianity is to blame for all our ills from housemaid's knee to acid rain. It is true that the opening of Genesis makes human beings lords of creation, but our lordship is limited by the context and the terms in which it is given. We are lords subject to and answerable to the Lord himself, who looked at the world he had made and called it good. Furthermore, we hold our estate, not in fee simple, but in trust for our children and our children's children. The St. Francises among us see the limits of their lordship in the goodness of all God's creatures. The rest of us pay more attention to the needs of our children. Either stance is ecologically sound.

As for those of ascetic bent, anyone following St. John is serving St. John's Lord, that same Lord who made the world and saw it to be good. He knows, then, that he is to contemn not the earth but the pursuit of earthly goods as ends in

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themselves. Thus, though he is not too likely to think in terms of Brother Snaildarter and Brother Peregrine Falcon, he is much more likely than most of the rest of us to elect a diet of millet seasoned with dry locusts, and enlivened of a Sunday with wild honey, over a regimen of roast beef and butter-drenched quail under glass. And he is wholly unlikely to own shares in factories that belch smoke and spew forth effluents in order to manufacture tempting baubles encased enticingly in non-biodegradable plastic bubbles to make the kind of money that will allow him to destroy the habitats of countless birdies and beasties in order to build the shopping mall that will finance his hand of cars, brace of yachts, and covey of snowmobiles. Such a man is ecologically a paragon.

Do I hear someone remark that Christians very often, indeed, fail to honor these tenets? So what else is new? We did not need Pope John to remind us that men are neither so good nor so evil as their ideologies, though it was nice of him to do so. All we have to do is to take note of the limited liberality of liberals and ask exactly what conservatives are out to conserve. So has it always been. Surely the remedy is not less Christianity, but more.

Finally, in his review of *Common Ground* [November 1], Maurice deG. Ford found himself reading and rereading like *Keats* confronting Chapman's *Homer*, not Milton, who was so much a scholar of Greek that he would have eschewed even so elegant a trot.

MARIAN BURKHART

Deja vu

Rockville Centre, N.Y.

To the Editors: . . . Maybe Maurice deG. Ford [November 1] was really thinking of Keats's famous poem "On First Looking into Milton's Lake Comus."

JAMES G. MURRAY

Return to the source

Auburn, Ala.

To the Editors: I was distracted while reading Maurice deG. Ford's review of *Common Ground* by J. Anthony Lukas [November 1]. Your reviewer said he felt "a little like Milton coming upon Chapman's Homer" and that he read and reread the book "and walked away each time with an even deeper amaze."

I didn't know Milton felt that way. Do you think deG. Ford could pass on his source so that I can add it to my Keats file?

THOMAS M. CURRAN

The editors reply: Writers, who are only human, are allowed to err. Editors, being divine, are paid to catch this sort of thing. We are still debating various lines of defense:

(a) We were just trying to see if you were paying attention.

(b) As Homer wrote, even worthy Horace sometimes nods. (Just kidding.)

(c) Who's Keats to complain? Did Milton come upon Chapman's Homer? Did "stout Cortez" come upon the Pacific?

Dualisms & deafness

South Laguna, Calif.

To the Editors: Is a dualistic mind-set sneaking up on us again? What is all this talk in your editorial about the secular vs. the Christian [" 'Feminism' and 'Church,' " October 4]? I am a human being who experiences life from the perspective of a female human being. I am not secular at one moment and Christian at another. When I grocery shop for my family am I a secular mother in the store or am I a Christian buying food? Or, how many Christian angels can dance on the end of a secular pin?

I am a feminist, that is, I am in the movement for the full social, political, moral, and religious equality for all women and men. My spirituality includes every dimension of my life. I agree that "self-identified Christian feminists, and a whole range of Christian women have varying degrees of sympathy" and solidarity on issues of importance to women's lives. Women are a multi-cultural people. Women acknowledge a great diversity of viewpoints among themselves. I do not agree that there are two camps of feminism: Christian and secular. To create a so-called feminism that is Christian and a feminism that is secular is to create a lie.

The abortion discussion is an example of diversity of opinion within the Christian feminist movement. There are some Christian feminists who have a world view that urges them to believe that the Supreme Being is the moral center of life. This tends to be a transcendent God who hands down rules of morality. These rules could have been handed from a Great Stone Carver in the sky directly to Moses. Feminists of this more traditional stance tend to have a deep belief in the rightness of God's plan for the world. There are other Christian feminists who believe that God has given human beings reason and the ability to control reproduction and that it is immoral not to do so, especially when these activities will diminish human pain. Both of these points of view are within the Christian feminist movement.

As a Catholic feminist, I do want "to build solidarity with women everywhere." At this particular moment, I do not want to hear any more pronouncements from celibate male authority figures as to how I am to think and feel and believe! As women, we have no female representation in the authority structure of the institution. Will the deafness of the Vatican hierarchy leave U.S. Catholic feminists no other choice than to throw a tea party in Boston Harbor?

EILEEN O'BRIEN MERCHANT

Feminist folly

St. Cloud, Minn.

To the Editors: Commonweal's editorial [" 'Feminism' and 'Church,' " October 4] is guilty of the most common Christian fallacy: assuming that the spiritual is necessarily to be preferred to the fleshy.

Secular feminism is concerned with the position of women in this world. Though no more immune to folly than any other human group, secular feminists are unlikely to lay profane hands upon the altar, if only because the altar and what it represents are not important to them. Setting aside the special issues raised by the problem of abortion, those who think secular feminists wrongheaded can rest secure in the conviction that nature is perfectly capable of taking care of herself.

"Christian feminism," by contrast, at

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least threatens to become a new syncretistic religion, as distant from traditional Christianity as traditional Christianity is from Judaism. To attack the symbol of God as Father is to propose major surgery on the Christian tradition, surgery the tradition is unlikely to survive. If the church (however defined) is unwilling or unable to repel challenges to its most central traditions, it would seem that its defeat in the lists of history is not only inevitable but deserved.

PHILIP E. DEVINE

Women's ways

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Before the church examines any "excesses of radical secular feminism,"["Feminism & Church," October 4] it should first examine itself for excesses of radical clerical machismo. The domination of women by patriarchical, hierarchical structures oppresses and is death-dealing to women who are on the bottom absorbing all the excess weight of an outdated, sinful structure. Away with neo-platonic iconography that places "secular" on the bottom and "spiritual" on the top, right under God!

For centuries, we women have talked with each other about birth control, sterilization, and abortion by our hearths, around our kitchen tables, and in later ages, at our coffee breaks. The issues are now in the public, in the press. Open dialogue cannot harm. Closing down the discussions will. Reproductive choice needs to be discussed. Remember the man who refused to look into Galileo's telescope because he feared new knowledge would change the world as he then knew it? So Galileo got condemned for heresy by the Inquisition. They burned Joan.

Women's ways of communicating with each other are different from the patriarchy's method of orders from above. We will make our own decisions as to who is feminist and who is not; what makes a feminist and what does not. Rome is the one forcing litmus tests on church members, not the feminists. We women prefer to be in a dialogical relationship about such things.

If Rome can dialogue with descendants of Martin Luther and Henry VIII, why not its own descendants of Mary?

At the Women's Ordination Conference meeting in October, the sponsorship of Catholics for a Free Choice was welcomed along with Priests for Equality and numerous religious orders and individuals. *Twin Circle* sent a check to help with scholarships. A women's pro-life group was invited to have a display table. Women-Church, of which WOC is a part, is working and living out a new program, and if it is anything, it is diverse. We are not marching in lock-step to anyone's orders, but trying to reflect upon our own experiences from which to discern the call of God, and to celebrate that.

As to your legitimate fear that Rome may dictate? Years ago I knew a sensitive pastor who found himself caught between having to exercise an authoritarian arm as ordered by his bishop and trusting the experience that children should receive communion first and confession later. He resigned rather than go against his own conscience and convictions.

The issues are tough ones today. They will not be easily answered by dogmas from Rome. If loyal dissent is not permitted, and the Vatican hardens its stance, the women will still be there announcing the Good News like they were when the men fled in fear. Certainly no good feminist women will tolerate being stoned one minute and showered with praise the next. The patriarchy had better lay down its stones and walk away from this attack.

RUTH McDONOUGH FITZPATRICK
Women's Ordination Conference

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Theology Workshop

22nd Theology Workshop, St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA 94575, June 16-20. Pheme Perkins: The Social and Moral World of St. Paul. Write: Br. Timothy McCarthy.

Maritain

Notebooks, Jacques Maritain, 312 pages, $13.89 post. paid, is a new companion to *Raissa's Journal,* 400 pages, also $13.89. Magi Books, Inc. 33 Buckingham Dr. Albany, N.Y. 12208.

Biblical Institute

21st Biblical Institute, Trinity College, Burlington, VT 05401, June 15-20, 1986. Faculty: Donald Senior, Carolyn Osiek, Roland Murphy, Bruce Metzger, Reginald Fuller, Joseph Cunneen. Write: Sister Miriam Ward.

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Carleton College seeks as Chaplain a man or woman who is committed to a ministry in higher education. Although historically related to the United Church of Christ, Carleton has been for many years a non-sectarian and religiously diverse liberal arts college. The Chaplain reports to the President and to a Committee on Religious Affairs composed of faculty, student, and administrative members. In addition to conducting its own programs, the office of chaplain works closely with college counseling services, student religious groups, off-campus denominations and programs, and local and national student service projects. Required qualifications: formal theological education (M.Div. or equivalent) and active tie to an historic community of faith; prior experience and responsibility in active ministry; evidence of intellectual vitality and interest in men and women of college age. Desired qualifications: although the Chaplain does not hold a faculty appointment, a scholarly degree, MA or Ph.D., would enhance likelihood of part-time teaching in and professional ties to an academic department; experience of a campus ministry. Nominations and applications should be received by January 31. Candidates should include a vita, a statement of interest in the position as it relates to their background, and the names, addresses, and telephone nos. of three references. Together with official records of graduate and theological education, they should be sent to: Robert H. Edwards, President, Carleton College, One North College St., Northfield, MN 55057. It is anticipated that the Chaplain will assume his or her duties on or about July 1, 1986. Carleton College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

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